

The DRIFWALKERS CAMPAIGN

EPISODE 03

“ORDERS OF BUSINESS”



From Eight's Journal

Entry #1

Every now and then I get an itch to write, and when that happens, I have to record the happenings of the day. And oh what an interesting day it was today and yesterday. Of course, before striking the quill to the paper, I had to beg Three to give me some stationary. Three, I wonder what her real name is. We did learn some real names today. Hank and Ken'yu Hadrian. Someone called me Trevor, but that doesn't seem right for me. I think I like Doc, name of the legendary gunfighter Doc Holiday from the First Age of Earth. Wow, he could have given some Stalkers a run for their money. Call me Doc! If someone doesn't tell me my real name soon, other than calling Pain in the Ass, I'm going to start referring to myself as Doc.

So now let's start my journal and I will not spin this yarn like some twelve year old girl penning her thoughts to a Dear Diary. No way.

I knew signing up for the experiment to unleash some sort of latent genetic material in me would eventually pay off. Even though when I did sign up I was half drunk, but that's another story. Around noon or so, Astrina approached me and my gang, The Driftwalkers. That's what they're calling us now. She said follow me and so we do, and she led us up to the place on the Arc, called the Workshop. What a mess. I thought she was going to assign us some sort of clean up duty. But no! What a surprise. She said the Workshop is now Driftwalker Territory. Well, maybe she didn't exactly say it like that.

So we start looking around our new digs. Three cargo containers rigged as bunkhouses are smack in the middle of the Workshop's yard, with a dilapidated, rotting fence serving to wall off the perimeter of the place. In the right southern corner, five chairs of various styles and conditions surround a moss encrusted table. Five better start fixing some of this stuff or the Waste will devour it for sure. Five (or Hadrian as he soon started calling himself) was more interested in half the crap around the place than hammering some legs back down on some furniture. No more than five minutes at our new place, Hadrian started his crafting, slicing and chiseling a piece of wood into a nice looking spear, which he handed over to Three with a half ass remark that she better not break it. Break it! He should be worried if she can use it. Chroniclers are not the most combative bunch, giving them a weapon is like giving a toddler a frying pan and saying, "Hey, make me an omelet". Of course, a precocious one might be able to pull it off, of course.

After sniffing around our new home (Well, Ogre did most of the sniffing, but I'll talk about him in a second), we all sat down around the lounge area and start shooting the shit. I wanted to talk about the dream world, but Four cut me off and said, "I shouldn't concern myself with that strangeness."

I said, "Well what if the dream world is the real world, and this is just a nightmare, a spell cast on us by some sort of wizard." Everybody just rolled their eyes at me. So I shut up. There's silence for about a minute, maybe it was less than a minute. Everybody probably ruminating about that were-creature last night. I hate silence. Had to break it.

"Hey, I don't think I properly introduced you to my new best friend. This here is Ogre." I said, motioning to my half bulldog, half shepherd flanking my side. With his tongue hanging out of his mouth, dripping tons of spit to the ground, Ogre panted up a storm. Poor buddy, probably should give him a splash of some water soon.

Four sneered. "Yeah, I met your new best buddy. This new best buddy saved Stupid's hide. And thank god, he did so I didn't have to get my hands dirty."

Seven (or Hank) smirked and looked at Four quizzically.

Four continued. "Yeah, I just got away from Hadrian and Pontiak, who hit me up with this laundry list of items that they wanted, when I run into Eight. Eight cannot leave well enough alone. He has to rub it into Sixter about how he beat him this game of chance. Sixter would like to do Eight some harm, because he thinks Eight cheated. Which we know Eight probably did---"

"Hey, I didn't cheat!" (God, I don't know how these rumors get started!)

"Eight, let me finish. So Sixter, who also doesn't like to get his hands dirty, sends his goon to smack Eight around. I told Eight to leave well enough alone, but it looked to me like Eight was about to get his skull cracked. Then here comes this Mutt out of nowhere that knocks Sixter's goon over and saves Eight from sure pain."

"Well, I can top that one!" Hank said, smiling and pointing to gaping spot in his mouth, where a tooth once joined a gum. "Me and Mubba had a little sparring session going and she thought she got the better of me, but I knocked her on her ass anyway. Learned my real name is Hank as well when she called me by it. How about you Hadrian? How did things go with you?"

Hadrian shook his head. "Frickin Pontiak. I try to teach him to take charge on the crafting, but he just let's everything go to hell while I'm out. He could of gotten half the stuff he needed from Sixter. But does he?" Hadrian's brow furrows and with a swipe of his hand, he pushes back the sweat beading on his forehead into his receding hairline. With hands folded, he stared at the ground, pensively, and grumbled.

Then Three said something about checking out the young ones for their potential and any rot they might be carrying. I asked her if any of them might have stalker potential. She said nope. Well, if we don't get us some stalkers soon we will be toast. I'm ready to rise up and become a Stalker, but Yassan wasn't about to give me any trade secrets.

Entry #2

Couldn't sleep. I keep thinking about that night when the five of us (well, no, six of us had watch. Got to include Ogre. He's a Driftwalker, too. Well, maybe more of a mascot), spotted that were-creature in the garden during nighttime watch. I remember it being really dark. I mean it was like God painted everything black, including my hands. I hold my hands up to my face and they weren't even there. I don't know why we can't light a torch or something, but Hank said it gives away our position. So we just stumble around in the dark, listening and listening. If we hear something, then strike a light. That's the rule.

Of course that night something else struck a light and a frickin bright one at that. We all saw it at once. This bright ball of fire cut a fiery path through the darkness and illuminated everything. It plummeted somewhere in the hills and explode into a blinding white light. Our eyes had to adjust to this whiteness, but when they did, we all saw it. A wolf-like creature stood about several yards away from us in the garden, snarling and glaring. Hank somehow figured out it was sort of were-wolf, which would make sense since it stood on its haunches. He pushed us back behind, taking on his role as the protective enforcer. I studied the creature, and I figured out it was here for the food only. It didn't mean us any harm. It just was hungry and afraid. I relayed that to the rest of the group. Hank made a gesture of good will and tossed a ration to it. The thing grabbed the ration and took a vegetable from the garden and split into the night. At that point, the fallen sun lost its light and all went pitch black again.

The next morning, Three's curiosity got the better of her and she went down to the garden to check out where the creature stood. Now this is where things get strange. No wolf tracks or any animal tracks for that matter. She found a boot print. A frickin wolf in boots it was! I mentioned to Hadrian about crafting an alarm trap to alert the watch if it come in again. He did his usual condescending grumble. You know with all these crafting thoughts in my mind I probably would make a descent gear head, too. Not that Hadrian would ever give me the benefit of the doubt.

Entry # 3

The committee meeting was supposed to be celebratory. Things were looking up for the Arc. More food. Less deaths. The hope of this genetic unlocking through the Driftwalker experiment. All good things to make the residents of the Arc hopeful, and then Silas brought the news the Elder's sickness had slipped him into a coma. Silas read to the committee and the

Arc crowd the Elder's last wishes: The four bosses and the Driftwalkers would rule the Arc. Then all shit broke loose. Maximon stepped up to podium and addressed the crowd that he is the rightful leader and that it is preposterous for the rule to be split among the nine of us. He leaves the podium. Then Astrina stepped up to it. She said she was not happy to have the Driftwalkers leading. Next, Oskar takes to the podium and goes off on some religious rant that we are all doomed. I thought at that moment with all three negative speeches the crowd would have lost it. But Hank pulled the crowd back with his speech about unity. Then Three made her speech about surviving and more clapping followed. The crowd was warming to the idea of a nine person rule. I made a speech about how the Elder gave me a chance and I proved myself, and now they should give me a chance to rule as well as the others. More positive feedback came from the crowd. Four wasn't in the mood to speak so he just supported me. Marlotte gave a positive speech that she believed the Driftwalkers should be part of the ruling party. Then Hadrian gave his speech that he should be ruling because he so smart. A little condescending if you ask me, but still effective. The crowd was good with the idea of the nine of us ruling the Arc together.

Then we took a vote on to work on building a palisade or checking out where that fire ball crashed landed. Check out the fire ball won the vote. Thank god. The waste has been calling me to get back out there since I woke up, and here is my chance to prove myself to Yassan. If all goes well, Yassan just might share some of his stalker expertise with me.