

DRIFTWALKERS

Episode 08 : The Animal Towers

Play Session: 12-8-2018

Scene: Rest, Recovery, & Crafting

The group talks with **Calisto** and she estimates it will be a full day of travel to get to her village.

Would not make it there today.

We discuss plans.

We have some hurt people.

Hank and **Lilith** think they will look around for food while **Ken** crafts a little before resting.

Hank spends 4 hours in morning resting and healing. Done at 1:30.

Doc also. **Lilith** also. **Carver** rests also

Ken work on the tents and tries to make 1 solid good tent – 5 hours, then spends 4 hours resting and healing. **Ken** succeeds in making one workable tent.

Hank and **Lilith** say they want to go out looking around. **Carver** thinks this is a bad idea, as they may get hurt.

Hank indicates he will be staying very close. **Carver** agrees that it is OK. But somebody else needs to be outside within sight of the others.

Doc wants to go also. **Doc** give Ogre a direct order to stay with **Jennifer**.

Calisto guards the building and keeps an eye on the exploring Driftwalkers.

Observe test: – **Doc** primary – unsuccessful. Takes about an hour.

Ken wakes up. About 6pm.

Ken wants to try and make a set of armor out of the Leather using the hide.

Jury-Rig test: **Ken** - 1 hour –(2 Successes) – success and Sturdy. 3 scrap used for Studded Leather

Studded Leather Armor – Gear Bonus: 3 (*equals 3 protection level*)

Carver wants a carving knife. **Ken** a little confused by the sudden request. **Jennifer** offers to give **Carver** her little knife, as she is good with a sling shot. **Ken** lets her have the Sling he has.

Ken tries to craft something else: group discusses, and decide he wants to try and make a Pick-Ax.

Jury-Rig test: Ken - 3 scrap – difficulty 5 – check – pushed – (3 successes) – a superior sturdy pick ax.

Pick Ax – Gear bonus 2.

No it is about 10pm. Bedtime.

Shifts with watches.

- 1st Shift – **Hank, Carver, Calisto**
- 2nd Shift – **Doc, Ogre**
- 3rd Shift – **Ken, Lilith**

We rest for the night.

During shift 1 – **Hank, Carver** and **Calisto** hear howling during shift. Seems pretty far away. We have never heard this in the Ark. Different than **Calisto**, very animal like. **Carver** asks **Calisto** about the howling. She indicates that we are closer to the foothills, near forested area, there are more wild animals than in the desert areas. Common wolf sounds.

No other issues during shift 1.

Shift 2 – uneventful.

Shift 3 – uneventful. But – **Jennifer** wakes up about half through shift. We learn some stuff from her. We learn – her real name, she does not know, **Jennifer** is what these people called her. We don't think she is 14/15 years old, more likely 12, just big and developed for her age. Likely from being in the zone. The people she referred to as her mommy and daddy were likely not her parents, but they took her in, or adopted her. Likely more going on here than we know. She is relatively skilled with the sling shot. Likely has a high agility. From the discussion, she was likely taken by this group. Probably was with this group for a few years.

Morning

Eat and drink.

Rolls for Rot — all roll 2 die because of protection from rudimentary Rot Suites **Carver** acquired in Ark.

Hank - takes a rot point / **Lilith** - takes a rot point / **Carver** - takes a rot point / **Doc** - takes a rot point

Ken – takes a rot point / **Calisto** – does not take a rot point

Rot rolls – for rot effects –

Hank – no issue. **Lilith** – no issue. **Carver** – 1 rot trauma – 1 agility damage. **Doc** – no issue

Ken – no issue. **Calisto** – no issue

Ark population roll – 1 loss.

Group heads out at first light.

Scene: The Last Stretch of the Trip

Ken'yu and **Carver** work on signals for when **Carver** is negotiating and **Ken** is using Telepathy. Cough is good, sneeze is bad.

We leave and head for section B-21 – NE.

Elevation continues to rise. Starting to see some trees. Evidence of some wildlife. Uneventful up the hill.

Single roll for the trip – for elevation change and change in terrain.

Endure or Athletics checks:

- **Hank** – nothing – **Doc** helps
- **Ken** – nothing – **Lilith** helps
- **Carver** - success
- **Lilith** – 2 success
- **Doc** – 2 success
- **Jennifer** – success
- **Calisto** - success

We make it up through some windy trails.

We come to the remains of a stream. This is a new sight for us. We see running water. From the N. Water is a little muddy. Moss growing on rocks in the stream. **Calisto** says she does not recognize this stream.

Carver decides he wants to check the water to see if it is clean. Tastes the water. He finds that the water seems to be clean. We are able to refill water containers. 2d3 worth. **Net of 3 rations of clean water!**

*(Note this was a roll I made earlier in the scene by **Calisto** called **Hunt Prey**. She rolled (4 Successes) – netting 2d3 rations of water with 2 successes. The other 2 successes I used to make the water clean. Hence the “finding” of the nearly dried up stream. I let you guys roll the dice for amount found).*

Lilith tries to mark this on the map. – had also ta**Ken** not of the location of the stone house. Big failure.

We continue. Mid-late afternoon. Start seeing some old structures.

Calisto stops and points ahead and indicates that the area in front of us is her home.

Calisto stops us and indicates that they have many scouting parties out during the day, it would be best if we do not run into them. She thinks it would be best to make to the tribe's home, and speak directly with the guards, avoiding the low level scouts who might make a rash decision upon seeing Human mutants.

Take a little longer but get there right at sunset, but avoiding the scouts, or take chance of scouts but get there earlier. We choose to take the time and get to the guards without dealing with scouts.

Calisto rolls – Sneak check – for entire group, to avoid the guards. – **Lilith** inspires – 1 success – sneak results - +1 success – total of (2 successes). Because a group – needed 2 to succeed. Did it!

We approach in a round about way with **Calisto** making shift to adjust for the scouting routes.

We run into the first people at the edge of the settlement.



A ramp at the bottom with the chassis of a car, that is connected to a rope heading up to the center tower. **Ken** deduces that the car runs the rope up to the middle tower. **Calisto** confirms that this is the way the scouts go. Easiest and safest way into the community.

Otherwise there are stairs, but you have to avoid wild animals. Much more dangerous.

Therefore, our goal is to get the guards to let us go up the car-pulley system.

Ken asks **Calisto** her role in the tribe – she goes out and hunts, skins and makes clothing and armor. She is quite skilled at making leather clothing, but not much else. Seems to be something like a Hunter type character.....? This is something new to us.

We approach the car and pulley area.

Calisto shares:

One of the reasons they live there, they are very high in the air, which provides protection from predators in forest. Rot also does not exist at the top of the structures.

As we get closer – we can see that the buildings are about 300 feet or so high. Visibility is poor from the bottom due to zone-fog part way up. Visibility from the top is likely poor as well.

We think we hear some sort of rhythmic drummer from tower to the East.

At the base of the tall structures, see ruins and dense vegetation. Walls at the lower levels of the towers are just missing. But structure must be OK.

As we get closer, **Calisto** refers to the car and pulleys the **Rope-Way**.

Ken'yu notices that the device cannot be operated from the ground. Somebody from the top has to bring you up. Excellent security measure.

We see a patrol that is walking in front of the Rope-Way.

3 in the patrol. The 'people' go into the chassis of the car, then a few minutes later the car ascends up the rope. Can kind of see six or so figures at the top maybe pulling the car up?

Calisto tells us the choices: Climb a tower (nobody will know until we get to top, but have to possibly deal with creatures). OR go to Rope-Way and hope they let us up seeing **Calisto**. OR **Calisto** can go first and hope she can make a case for us.

Lilith asks how well **Calisto** knows the Alpha, referring to the Grand Alpha of the entire community. She says she can introduce us to the guards but has no right to talk with the Grand Alpha. Her rank is too low.

The team decides to openly approach the platform with **Calisto** and ask to talk with leadership. Have **Jennifer** come with **Doc**, holding hand?

No weapons out. We follow **Calisto** up to the Rope-Way structure. As a full group.

All kinds of pluses and minuses for the situation grand totaling: **+2 total mod dice on initial meeting.**

Scene: Meeting the Guards

As we approach, we see 2 figures unlike anything we have ever seen. Look like Dogs but walking upright.

As they see us approach – both are carrying long spears and wearing light leather protection of excellent quality. (*Well, as excellent as it can be in a wasteland*)

As we approach the spears come up and **Calisto** puts her arms out and makes hand signals.

As soon as **Calisto** does this, one of the Guards gives her signals back. Then start speaking in a language we do not understand. This goes on for a bit. After a while, it seems to not going bad, but not going well.

Calisto points to **Hank** and **Jennifer**. Making gestures and speaking. (3-4 minutes)

Calisto comes back to us and says: *‘Well, as I suspected, they want to judge you for themselves. You will need to make your case why you should be granted access into the village. They will not take you in based on my word alone. They want to hear what you have to say. I will tell you I believe you have a good chance of getting entry, but you must make a good impression on the guards.’*

Hank asks if they have ability like hers to look within? **Calisto** says ‘No’.

Carver asks if the guards are fluent in our language. **Calisto** says ‘Yes’.

Carver is ready. We all approach. So they can see all of us.

Carver, **Hank** and **Jennifer** move forward. Rest of group close behind.

Calisto introduces **Carver**, **Hank** and **Jennifer** to Guard Master **Artis** and **Jaimus**. Then steps out of the way.

Carver, **Hank** and **Jennifer** move forward.

Group bows to Guard Masters.

Carver – *‘THank you for speaking with us (introduces group), we come from a village a few days walk from here. We feel that the difficulties of living in this world make it desirable to make allies and trading partners. We would like to offer friendship and a possible alliance between our groups. We would like to speak with somebody who would be able to discuss this.’*

Left side guard – **Artis** – ‘How big is the tribe that you come from?’

Carver – ‘We have about 200 people, who are dwindling due to lack of resources and are looking for ways to protect our own and thrive.’

When he mentions 200, they look at each other.

Ken – uses Telepathy to try and see what **Artis** is thinking at that point – He is thinking that 200 people is about double the amount of their tribe and that could be a dangerous group to be at odds with.

Ken’yu give a light cough, as per the pre-arrange signal.

Carver scratches his head, he cannot remember which signal that is!

Artis – looks at **Hank** because he is with **Jennifer**. ‘How many young ones in your tribe?’

Hank: ‘We have very few young ones, but we would like to reach a mutually beneficial relationship in these times.’

Jaimus makes some sort of noise – hard to describe. Kinda of a whiny noise, as soon as he does that, Ogre immediately runs up to **Jaimus**. **Jaimus** gets down on one knee and looks to be” talking” to Ogre.

Artis: ‘How many more of you are out in the woods?’

Hank: ‘Our group is the 6 you see here, nobody else is with us, we came out on an expedition with **Calisto** to meet you.’

Artis: ‘How long did it take you to get here?’

Hank: ‘If I am to assume what you want to understand you want to know how long **Calisto** has been gone?’

Artis: ‘No, I want to know how long it would take your armies to get to us?’

Hank: ‘It would take about 2 ½ days to get here, but we do not have an army that would march on you. My role is that of a guard, somewhat like you; but our group represents researchers, building and trying to survive. We have those who protect and those who trade, but we do not have an army. I was once part of a force like that, back before, but not now.’

Artis: Looks at **Carver**. ‘Are you the leaders of your tribe?’

Carver: ‘We are part of the council that governs our group. We govern by council.’

Artis: ‘What is your ranking in your group?’

Calisto: ‘**Artis**, they do not rank their members like we do.’

Artis: ‘Understood.’ (nodding)

Jaimus: Looks at **Doc**. ‘You and this dog are friends?’

Doc: ‘Definitely, he saved me from getting hurt.’

Jaimus asks for the story. He is interested in this.

Doc tries to explain, he explains he was going to insult some others for loosing in a game of chance, he almost got punched, Ogre save him from that. Ogre is one of his best friends. We have many that are part of our group.

Jaimus: ‘You have more Ogre’s at your camp?’ (probably thinking Humans call dogs “Ogres”)

Doc: ‘Yes’

Jaimus: *'You are a gambler?'*

Doc: *'Yes.'*

Artis: *'One of you is a Doctor?'*

Carver: *'Yes, **Lilith** takes care of us when we are wounded or get ill.'*

Artis: *'You are skilled at fixing your Tribe's structure when it gets out of place?'*

Lilith: *'I do that to the best of my knowledge.'*

Artis: *'What do you call yourselves? (looks at **Lilith**)'*

Lilith: *'We call ourselves the Driftwalkers'*

Artis: *'I mean what is your individual names?'*

Lilith: *'You can call me **Lilith**'*

Artis looks at **Ken:** *'You don't talk?'*

Ken: *'I talk plenty, but **Carver** talks better. I make stuff.'*

Artis looks at **Doc:** *'What are you called?'*

Doc: *'Doc'*

Artis looks at **Jennifer:** *'Is this big one your father?'*

Jennifer: *'My father was killed, these ones saved me, they are my family now.'*

Jaimus makes a noise and **Ogre** goes back to **Doc**.

Jamus and **Artis** put their spears down at their sides.

Artis: *'Let's keep this simple, what is your main goal with our tribe?'*

Carver: *'To create an alliance, to establish trade and to help each other. An alliance where we could pass through each other's territories without fear of confrontation.'*

Artis: *'OK, the one called **Carver**, please approach and turn around and show me the back of your neck.'*

Carver does so.

Artis looks – his hand paw grabs at back of his neck and moves it around, then says t**Hank** you.

Then asks **Hank** to do the same thing.

Hank moves forward and kneels down so **Artis** can reach his neck. Same then t**Hanks** him.

Asks for **Doc**, **Ken** and **Lilith**. All agree.

Asks **Jennifer** to come up. She looks at **Hank** to see what she should do.

Hank asks if he can bring her over.

Artis: 'Sure'

Hank takes a knee in front of her.

Artis looks at her neck and immediately takes a step backwards. He is visibly upset.

Raises his voice to **Jennifer**: 'Where are you from?'

Jennifer is very nervous. 'I am wanderer and am not from anywhere.'

Hank looks and sees a symbol inked into the back of her neck.

A circle with a single line in the middle – at top of circle there is a small gap, this is where the line is and it goes about half way down.

Hank takes her back.

Artis: 'Have you had contact with the Watchers?' Looking at **Hank**.

Hank: 'I do not know who the Watchers are, I am sorry. I do not know of this symbol.'

Artis asks **Ken**: 'You tell me what you do know, tell the truth.'

Ken: 'I have no idea who the watchers are, what symbol?'

Lilith makes a **Comprehend check** – (1 success). She knows that the Watchers are a myth, that they are supposed to be a group of semi-sentient machines or robots, built by humans of the **Second Age** of Earth. Myth is that these Watchers were responsible for serving certain groups that were at war with each other at the end of the **Second Age**. They were built to oversee experiments in making superhumans. The stories are much more extensive, but that is all she recalls. But she assures everyone they are myths only.

Hank and **Ken** make Comprehend checks, but other than recognizing the name "Watchers" - cannot remember anything about the stories.

Lilith speaks up to **Artis** and **Jaimus**: 'Gentlemen, I know of who you speak, but I do not believe they are what you believe they are, or that she could be involved with them.' – referring to **Jennifer**.

Artis looks at **Lilith**: 'When was the last time you saw a watcher?'

Lilith: 'We have not seen them, we think they are a myth, I have only heard of them through books.'

After she says this, **Jaimus** turns around and approaches a canvas behind him.

As he approaches the canvas, he is visibly sha**Ken**.

Jaimus: 'Myth you say, **Doctor**?'

Lilith: *'Yes, I have only heard of these stories of these things through books.'*

Jaimus: *'Does this look like a myth to you?'*

He pulls the canvas off and pulls out some sort of broken item. It is some sort of metal alloy, very advanced looking, and very alien-looking, at least to us.

Jaimus: *'I assure you they are not a myth, Doctor.'* He looks frustrated and angry.

Lilith: *'Can I sketch this? I am a librarian.'*

Jaimus: *'I think perhaps having an audience with our leaders is a good idea.'* Or at least I did until you raised my skepticism by the symbol present on the young one's neck.' He is having trouble drawing correlation of how we found her.

Carver: *'Let me try and make an effort to be more clear about us. I have never heard of the Watchers, although some may have. However this little girl, although of human kind, must have been part of a different settlement. We found her along the way here and have taken her in to help her to ensure she survives. That is how she came to be with us - she is very young and likely does not have memory of where she came from originally.'*

They are confused, likely they are not real sharp. **Artis** says something to **Calisto**. Motion his head towards car.

Calisto turns to us and says: *'They think it may be too big a risk to bring us up.'*

Hank: *'What if only some of us go up?'*

Doc makes a pitch about that we just are helping a human child, just like they likely would for a young one like them if they found her in the woods.

Carver makes a last pitch for joining in an alliance to be more viable. We are willing to show how to grow vegetables. To help, we must work together. He assures them there is no trickery here.

Carver must make a **Manipulate check**: after pushing he gets (1 Success). His last ditch effort saves the conversation and convinces the guards to let us up! *(Note that a successful Manipulate check that does not break Empathy means that although successful, it will come with conditions. But that is still miles better than an outright failure.)*

They agree to let us in. They will at least see to it that we are able to get to the next step in the process.

But – they do have a condition, he needs us to do something – we have to leave all of our weapons and armor down here guarded by **Calisto** or the guards themselves.

Calisto is OK with this. *'My people are an honorable people, you will be treated fairly and properly, but for precautions sake, no weapons. There is now no other way up.'*

The group agrees.

Scene: In the Animal Towers

The guards put us in the car. We see that they are opening their mouths and are making some sort of sound we cannot hear. As soon as they do this, the car starts to move upwards.

When we are almost to the very top, the car frame stops and sits over a balcony.

We can get out with a short jump to the balcony, then take a ladder up to the main deck.

We all head out and go up. When we get to the top we see what was pulling on the car.

The six figures that were pulling are walking gorillas. Minimum of 7' tall, massive, with amazing leather armor and very nice spears. They look like even bigger, hairier versions of **Hank**.

Another hound creature is present. The hound introduces himself as **Roman**. Welcomes us to 'The Animal towers'

Roman: *'As of this point forward you are our guests, but I ask that you treat all you meet respectfully and honorably. We are very aware of Humans, but most of us have never seen a real one alive - so you may get some stares. You can make your way around the Central Tower freely as you wish and someone will find you when they are ready to see you. If you are told to stay out of certain areas, I recommend you obey the request.'*

He continues: *'One of the first places you should go once your initial meeting is over should be to see another canine named **Melville**. He is quite high ranking, even higher than myself. He is the **Canine Alpha**.'*

Seems to be an alpha for each animal species. We do not know how many species there are.

As we look around we see a few different species of anthropomorphic animals: apes, canines, bears, and reptiles - all kitted out in armor and large weapons. It is laughably obvious we are of no threat to them.

Roman bids us a farewell piece of advice: *"Just head straight ahead, and you will see a large tent in the middle of the tower. That is where you will find a trader if interested in looking around."*

We head in and walk around. The central tower seems to be very organized. We do not see a great many creatures, but when we do, they all seem respectful and to walk in small packs of their own breed. There are obvious ranks as are witnessed and demonstrated through bowing and supplication.

The society seems to be very structured – even compared to the Ark. If Ark 99 could be categorized as Mafia-Like or "Gang-Like", the Animal Towers would be closer to "Military-Like" - even if not quite as regimented.

We try and **Insight check** – to see how we should fit in. Trying to determine proper etiquette.

Carver and **Doc** both succeed – they discuss and figure out it is probably not expected for us to bow or defer until we meet an **Alpha**. This is a guess, but probably a pretty good one.

We see numerous flags flying with different drawings on them. Some are similar to the symbol on **Jennifer's** neck, but with a big X through the symbol.

We get to the central tent. See a small lizard-like creature. Likely female?

'Ah, visitors, how can I help you?' she says.

Carver bows: *'Very pleased to meet you. My name is **Carver**, and these are my friends.'*

Lizard: *'Pleasure to meet you, my name is **Cynthia**.'* She is very personable. An obvious trader.

Her wares are in baskets in front of all of us. **Carver** looks at the items.

We See: cucumbers and tomatoes, rags, bandages, screws, etc. (all manner of misc. scrap for sale)

Carvers asks **Cynthia** if the cucumbers and tomatoes are the main food sources here?

Cynthia: *'They are the only food sources, Human-**Carver**.'*

Carver: *'They look ripe, do you grow them yourselves?'*

Cynthia: *'Yes, we grow them in the North Tower.'*

GM calls for an **Observation check** –

Ken, Doc – failure

Carver & Lilith – (1 success each)

Lilith – 1 success

Carver and **Lilith** sense something is amiss with the baskets of food. The others seem normal.

Lilith pushes to try and see what is amiss: No increased success but takes 2 Wits damage. – She is even more confused and not sure what seems off to her.

Carver pushes as well – No further successes either.

Carver – *'**Cynthia** we are hoping to be meeting with **Melville** soon, but we would like to come back and reassess your wares and possible trade after. Would that be ok?'*

Cynthia: *'Of course, Human-**Carver**. I am here to trade.'*

Cynthia tells us where to find Melville. Canine area will have flags with Paws on them. She wishes us good fortune and turns to help another customer as we head to a bench to get our bearings and wait for the promised 'someone' to approach us.

... END SESSION ...

