

The Pack

Episode 6: Cannibals! Part 1

by

Ash Catherwood
&
J. Gordon Ross

THE PACK EPISODE 6: CANNIBALS! PART 1

HANNAH HAWK

This is Hannah Hawk, and I am coming to you live from the Stinksprout harvest here in Bandolier. Here in the breadbasket of The Accord, I am surrounded by a sea of green, the towering green stalks of the stinksprout fields, now ready to pick. Spirits are high. Hundreds of people are here from all around The Accord. They're here to celebrate. And they're here to pick stinksprouts. I have a reveler here. Sir, what does the harvest mean to you?

MR. SALTZMAN

It means the changing of the seasons. It's changing from the Drier season to the Dry season. And that's better, 'cause it's not so dry.

HANNAH HAWK

And you, ma'am. What does the harvest mean to you?

LADY GRIS

It means fresh stinksprouts and all those vitamins you don't get from eating human flesh or dogs.

HANNAH HAWK

I am begin signaled that they are ready for the First Picker. The First Picker Ceremony, as you know, is when they send a child to pick the first stinksprout as a symbol of rejuvenation.

Hannah walks over to the Youngling Brown.

HANNAH HAWK

Hello, First Picker. Can you tell us your name?

KID

I'm Youngling Brown and I'm this many years old.

HANNAH HAWK

What are you going to do with that first stinksprout you pick?

KID

I'm gonna plant it in the ground to give back to The Accord.

CROWD

Awwwww. We love you, Youngling!

HANNAH HAWK

Alright, get out there and pick that sprout.

Youngling walks into the field.

HANNAH HAWK

Youngling is walking to the field. He has his eye on a plant. He's reaching out to take a sprout.

CANNIBAL

Raaaawr!

CROWD

Oh no, a cannibal!

Horrible crunching noises. The crowd screams.

HANNAH HAWK

A random cannibal has emerged from the sprouts and attacked Youngling Brown. I am covered in his blood! It's everywhere. Oh no! He was so full of promise! Now he doesn't have a face! Or a life! Having a life is the most important part of having a face! WHY!?

CHIEF

All Cops to The Roost. Immediately. We're going to cut away until we can get this sorted out. Billie, you're up.

BILLIE DANIELS

Oh, uh. I wasn't supposed to be on today. But, I know a story that relates to the town of Bandolier. It's the tale of the Green Lady.

Long ago, a great seer prophesied that Bandolier would be a prosperous town, vital to people all around. So pilgrims came in a multitude to the present day site of Bandolier, which was then barren, and dry as chalk. No crop would grow in the soil.

But there was one voice among the believers who spoke against the prophecy. She saw how it was and not how it could be. She devised a vicious plot to drive the settlers

(MORE)

BILLIE DANIELS (cont'd)
away forever. She worked tirelessly over the course of a whole night, spreading the group's excrement all over the fields, putrifying the area.

The settlers packed their things and left in a great procession. And as they passed, she mocked them, singing, "Fiddle-dee-gonk! I curse this ground!"

And with her song, she began to dance. And she danced with so much joy that she lost grip of her lantern and dropped it on the field strewn with waste.

An inferno erupted and burned for three days and three nights. And on the fourth day, when the embers died, the people searched the field for the lady. But all they found were green plants that had sprouted from the ground. Her fire had fertilized the soil. By denying the prophecy, she had made it come true. That's also why they're called stinksprouts, despite their sweet smell. They sprouted out of the stink.

It's said that if you walk the fields of Bandolier at night, with nothing but a lantern to light your way, you might see a Green Lady, dancing wildly and crying, "Fiddle-dee-gonk!"

And that's the last thing you'll ever hear: "Fiddle-dee-gonk."

Now I'm going to give the broadcast back to the Cops for their emergency.

CHIEF

Alright, are all the Cops assembled?

BOOGER

We're here, Chief.

CHIEF

We've got ourselves a situation. A child was bitten in the face by a cannibal. With the attack on Bill's

(MORE)

CHIEF (cont'd)

Pit, it's clear that the cannibals are getting more brazen.

CLIFF DANGER

Why are we talking? I got eight good Cops. We should go into their mountains, find their caves, kill their leaders and take out as many as we can.

CLEMENCE FIDDLEDOWN

Now Cliff, kids get bit by thangs all the time. Who of us ain't been bit in the face? Yer gettin' all wet in the grit o'er somethin' we got handled.

CLIFF DANGER

Handled? Clemence, we had to use the Wave Cannon Electrolyzer to turn them away last time. You got another super weapon hidden away somewhere?

CLEMENCE FIDDLEDOWN

Goin' into them caves is foldin' our aces. We're Jet Pack Cops, we operate in the sky. Ain't much sky in a cave.

CLIFF DANGER

There's an army of people-eating savages amassed on our border. We need to strike now while we have the initiative.

CLEMENCE FIDDLEDOWN

We all eat people, Cliff. Old Spit Patterson fell into his own stingrat pit just last week and he was delicious.

CLIFF DANGER

It's not the eating. It's the killing.

CLEMENCE FIDDLEDOWN

Ain't that what you want us to do?

CLIFF DANGER

Chief, make the call.

CHIEF

Alright, team. All Cops proceed to the East Mountains for a full attack. Kill all cannibals on sight. The Cops will be in transit

(MORE)

CHIEF (cont'd)
for a while, so let's go to a
previously recorded segment.

ANTIQUES SEGMENT

HORRACE
Salutations, Accord. This is Officer
Horrace Yusif and with me today for
an illuminating chat is none other
than...

TEPA
I can introduce myself. I am Tepas
Raslav and this is Tech Talk.

HORRACE
Ha ha, an excellent jest, Tepas. The
program is entitled Olden Ways: An
Exploration into the Function and
Meaning of Bygone Relics.

TEPA
No, it's Tech Talk. We talk tech.
We invite villagers to bring their
recovered artifacts and we assess
and appraise.

HORRACE
Our first antiquarian is right
here. Good sir, how came you by
this item?

FREDWARD
I'm Fredward Beaujolais from
Dustown. And I found this thang in
a hole, it was at the bottom of the
hole, so I took it out the hole.

HORRACE
Let's describe the object for the
listeners. We have a metallic box
with a handle and retractable cord.
Opposite the handle, protrudes a
flattened length of metal with a
rounded tip, serving as a framework
for a chain unlike any I've ever
seen.

TEPA
It's a blade.

HORRACE
An interesting theory, Tepas. What
is your evidence?

TEPA

The links of the chain have sharpened edges. The chain goes around in a circle and each link cuts as it goes.

HORRACE

Aha! I think I have it.

TEPA

(unimpressed)

Yes, tell us more.

HORRACE

This is what was called a chain saw, a brilliantly designed contraceptive device.

TEPA

You shove this where?

HORRACE

No no no no no. In days of yore, the population had exploded so far there were great fears of starvation and environmental strain, so they cleverly set about to control reproduction by constructing specialized sleepaway camps wherein sinful youths would be collected, corralled and corrected. A dutiful public servant saw to it that...

TEPA

Kids get chopped up - they have no kids. I know this story. There was a ceremonial terror mask to protect his face from bits and backslash.

HORRACE

Yes, exactly.

TEPA

It seems so barbaric.

HORRACE

It was a primitive era. We cannot judge them by our civilized standards. Remember, these poor souls drank water.

Tepa makes a sound of disgust.

FREDWARD

What kin I git fer that dang ol' hole saw?

TEPA

It's only good on a shelf. You could get two buzzards skins, and a half bowl of wild rust oats.

HORRACE

Tepa! Surely you must see the cultural value. Why, a collector would pay upwards of three buzzard skins.

FREDWARD

Well, Yick-a-boo!

TEPA

You. Next. Small person, show us your thing.

CHILD

I found this paper and it's got a smile on it, but it's the wrong colour. The teeth are all white like a cloud.

Tepa takes the paper.

TEPA

This says, four out of five dent-istes recommend Smilenol tooth paste. What is tooth paste?

HORRACE

It's nothing more than snake oil. You see, the ancients ground up the teeth of their fallen enemies and made a paste. They applied this paste to their own teeth, believing it would transfer vital tooth energy.

TEPA

Did it work?

HORRACE

Of course not. Our best thinkers have well demonstrated that there is no such thing as vital tooth energy. The teeth decay at a natural rate, owing to nothing but one's age and the aspect of the moon one was born under.

TEPA

As for value, it's paper, so it can burn. I'd say one handful of dirt, but not good dirt. And not a big handful.

HORRACE

If that. Next, please.

Scraping sounds as Hillbilly#2 drag in a port-a-potty.

TEPA

What is this?

HILLBILLY#2

I don't know. You supposda tell me.

HORRACE

Can we look inside?

HILLBILLY#2

Sure, it opens right up.

TEPA

This is a big blue box, big enough for one person to stand in. There is a door, and inside is a shelf with a seat. There is a lid on the seat. Lifting it up, there is a hole and a small storage area.

HORRACE

The latch on the door toggles between "Vacant" and "Occupied." Hmmm. I must admit I'm stumped.

TEPA

Oh, you don't know what this is?

HORRACE

No, I don't know.

TEPA

You want me to explain?

HORRACE

Yes, please.

TEPA

This is a confinement cell for a dung slave. You don't know what a dung slave is?

HORRACE

No. Go on.

TEPA

The ancients' huge population had enormous demands for fertilizer. So, they took their prisoners, their fat guys and they locked them in boxes and made them poop.

HORRACE

Forced defecation? But how much fertilizer could one slave produce?

TEPA

A surprising amount over a whole lifetime. And they were very well fed. We hear of enormous festivals where thousands of people would gather. That would bring offerings of chili, ribs or hot dog. And the confinement cells would be lined up in rows to one side. While the dung slaves slaved, the revelers would party.

HORRACE

Yuck. Simply boorish. How could a society withstand such crudeness?

TEPA

It didn't.

HILLBILLY#2

Well, I don't want nothin' ta do with barbary. Y'all kin keep it!

HORRACE

No, you must take this away... Sir? Sir? Come back!

TEPA

This was Tech Talk. Tapa out.

CLEMENCE FIDDLEDOWN

Chief, we have a cannibal cave in sight.

CLIFF DANGER

Proceed in attack formation. Unless, you have a problem with that, Clemence.

CLEMENCE FIDDLEDOWN

No, sir. I'm just an old cop, Cliff. I do my job, even when it gives me a jinx-y feelin' in my bones.

Jet pack noises as the Cops swoop into the cave.

HARRIETTE T'KEMBE

Eyes peeled, we're going in.

TEPA RASLAV

Rook, Booger, hold to the rear.

ROOK STOLTZ

Great, I'm stuck in the back with
Pollino.

BURT POLLINO

Burt Pollino keeps the team
covered.

More jet pack sounds as the team go into a large cavern.

ROCKY DHAKAR

Chief, I see cannibals ahead in the
cavern - at least twenty, maybe
more.

FRANKIE HUANGSE

Why, they're just standing there.
It's like they're waiting for us.

CLEMENCE FIDDLEDOWN

This ain't right.

CLIFF DANGER

Pres forward. Ready weapons for
attack. Hold formation. Steady.

ROCKY DHAKAR

They're not moving. Don't they know
we're gonna kill them?

The cannibals groan together.

CANNIBAL

Cops! You come to kill us. But we
kill you. Ugfohl, now!

A bomb goes off in the cavern. The cave begins to collapse.

TEPA RASLAV

The ceiling is coming down.

CLIFF DANGER

Cannibals!

CLEMENCE FIDDLEDOWN

Run!

Rocks are falling everywhere with a rumble.

BOOGER

Cliff!

There is a confusion of jet packs and tunnel collapsing
sounds. Eventually, things are quiet.

Booger coughs.

BOOGER

Hello? Chief? Hello?

CHIEF

I hear you, Booger. Report.

BOOGER

Hello? Does anyone read? All frequencies, can anybody hear me?

CHIEF

Those iron caves must be amplifying her signal, but blocking ours. She can't hear us.

BOOGER

I can see on my sensor dial I'm at full broadcast strength, but I'm not picking up anything. The iron in this cave must be blocking incoming signals. I'll keep my channel open. Maybe somebody out there is hearing me.

Booger gets up and cleans herself off. She is in a dark cave.

BOOGER

Heelllloo! Hello?

CLIFF DANGER

Bugra. Don't draw attention.

BOOGER

Cliff!

CLIFF DANGER

Raslav told you to stay back.

BOOGER

You're lucky I didn't. If I hadn't pushed you out of there, you would've been crushed.

CLIFF DANGER

I am crushed.

BOOGER

Yeah, your leg's pinned pretty bad under heavy rocks. But if we use both our packs, we can thrust you right out of there. Let me just turn my...

CLIFF DANGER

Don't ignite that pack!

BOOGER

What?

CLIFF DANGER

Your intake is full of iron dust.
You ignite that pack and we're both
dead.

BOOGER

What do I do?

CLIFF DANGER

You need water. Flush out that
intake.

BOOGER

Where am I going to find water?

CLIFF DANGER

We're high in this cave and water
runs down.

BOOGER

There's a tunnel that leads down,
but it's pretty narrow.

CLIFF DANGER

Looks like you have to shimmy down.

BOOGER

Yeah, if I take my pack off, I'll
fit.

Booger takes off her pack and squeezes into a small tunnel.
She crawls uncomfortably through the small space.

BOOGER

I'm crawling down the tunnel. It's
dark, but there's some kind of soft
light up ahead.

Booger crawls on into darkness.

CHIEF

This ends the first half of this
episode. Tune in next time to hear
the exciting conclusion to this
story.