

"PLANET OF THE APES"

CONCEPT

CONCEPT

PROLOGUE

Astronauts Alan Virdon and Stan Kovak are midway through a long range reconnaissance space shot circumnavigating the Belt of Orion and its satellites when they encounter violent turbulence which puts severe stress on their space craft and brings about heavy damage. Such a storm in space is a phenomenon unknown and unexplainable to them. All instruments and computers within the Craft become inoperable and they are unable to communicate with Earth. Soon they are hopelessly lost, hurtling at tremendous speed deeper and deeper into the infinite depths of the Universe. Their one hope is the Emergency Homing Device which is designed to return them to Earth. They decide there is no choice but to abort their mission. They activate the Homing Device.

The Series begins with the return of Kovak and Virdon to Earth only to discover they have passed through a time warp and the earth is no longer as they knew it.... It has become the PLANET OF THE APES.

THE LEADS

ALAN VIRDON is the more sensitive, more responsible astronaut, with a wife, a child, Chris, and a home in Houston, Texas. He will meet other women...but standing in the way of a truly romantic relationship is the memory of his wife and child back home. STAN KOVAK, on the other hand, is much more a man of the moment, no strings on him. He realizes they must make new lives in this new world.

Dr. Hasslein's theory of time change in space while traveling beyond the speed of light has long been accepted. Virdon and Kovak are prepared to accept the fact that Earth has aged two thousand years during their absence. A new society has emerged in which Apes dominate and Humans are subservient and hopelessly outnumbered.

GALEN is a courageous chimpanzee who possesses some of the taboos and peculiar concepts of his civilization and heritage, but he is open-minded, and willing to learn from the astronauts. In the first episode Galen and the astronauts become cautious friends, fellow fugitives, and begin to feel an almost brotherly allegiance. Galen is our third lead.

THE GOAL

Stranded in an era in which they are strangers, the astronauts think about the possibility of returning to their own time period. Before the total destruction of their own space ship, Virдон managed to rescue a magnetic disk containing all information fed by the circuitry of the ship's computers from the moment of take off to the instant of forced landing.

Rumors of an advanced pocket of civilization give Virдон the hope that he might find a group with the scientific capability of building a space ship and by feeding the disk into a computer, find the means of returning them to their own time period.

It is this hope that causes Virдон to cling desperately to the magnetic disk and continue his journey from one place to another on the PLANET OF THE APES.

Kovak is ambivalent about this search. He feels there is basically no chance to return, that Virдон's hope is a useless one, and their wisest decision would be to find a place here where they can be happy enough to live out the rest of their days. And yet, he too would be delighted if Virдон's dream were true.

Their varying approaches to this search provide a constant source of conflict between Virдон and Kovak... conflict that will be heightened during those moments when

the temporary loss of the disk will impel Virдон to face danger for its recovery...a goal that Kovak feels not really worth the risk.

The third member of our triumvirate, GALEN, the chimpanzee, views the conflict between Virдон and Kovak almost with a scientific detachment. An ape of intense scientific curiosity, tied to the two humans by a common bond of friendship and their equally common position as fugitives from the established order, he has always been fascinated by the stories of the scientific advances of the era from which Virдон and Kovak have come, and would very much like to experience them at first hand.

But his drive, one of curiosity, cannot equal that of Virдон, which is the intense pull of a man towards his home...

THE APE SOCIETY

ORANGUTANS have emerged as the ruling class. Generally, they shape and control all branches of Government, serving as Judges, Ministers and Administrators.

GORILLAS are the enforcers; Policemen, Soldiers and Hunters. Whenever severe measures have to be taken against enemies of the State, gorillas carry out the desired action.

CHIMPANZEES are the intellectuals of the society. Usually they are Doctors, Teachers or Writers. Some are viewed with suspicion since they seek answers buried in the past, questioning the very doctrines and tenets upon which Ape law exists.

A Council of Elders rules the society. ZAIUS, an orangutan, is the presiding officer. The Council includes representative chimpanzees and gorillas, but the orangutans generally dominate. All edicts concerning Ape philosophy, religion, morals or laws are laid down by the Council of Elders.

URSUS, a gorilla, who heads all military and police forces is not only menacing but the most intelligent of all gorillas. Dedicated to hunting down the astronauts, he believes them to be a menace to his society because of their superior intelligence which could bring them followers

amongst rebellious humans.

ZAIUS seeks the astronauts to extract whatever knowledge they possess and therefore wants them brought in alive. Whether Ursus will obey such an order is a question.

THE HUMAN INHABITANTS OF THE PLANET

These inhabitants are best understood in relation to the territorial zones they inhabit.

The inner zone (the center of the ape world) is sprinkled with humans who occupy menial roles. Their jobs are those of minor clerks, servants, laborers and slaves, with an occasional human who has been elevated to the rank of an overseer. They are subject to the ape civilization and exist at its whim.

The second zone is inhabited by peasantlike humans who live an agrarian life and live with the threat that they may be pressed into whatever service their ape master might decide.

In the forbidden zone, we will find pockets of renegades who have either fled from a totalitarian government or have developed a civilization of their own.

Unlike the humans in the original PLANET OF THE APES picture, all of our people have the power of speech and an intellectual capacity equal to that of the apes. The apes rule because of their numerical superiority, control of weapons, superior knowledge and the dictatorship they have created.

The above description of the Human inhabitants of this upside down society provides a wide spectrum of dramatic roles which will enable us to utilize Guest Stars.

THE PLANET

There are basically three territorial zones on the Planet. The two innermost are under the domain of the apes. The first or inner zone is the nucleus of ape civilization embracing all of its institutional and cultural aspects. All strata of ape society mingle here attended by humans in various capacities. The second zone is a rural area inhabited by peasantlike humans and lower apes who have managed to establish a shaky coexistence. The third or forbidden zone is a large, unexplored, uncharted region completely off limits to ape society. We shall discover the forbidden zone contains the secrets that explain the reversal of evolution on this planet.

Transportation on the planet is by horse. Weapons are primitive, and there is a strange mixture of old-fashioned machines and utensils with an occasional one that is even unknown in the world the astronauts left. For although the old civilization has been destroyed and most of its tools and artifacts lost...occasionally something is found which by trial and error or by use of intelligence, the apes and/or humans put to use. There are many taboos in this new civilization, created out of ignorance, fear and a belief that humans caused the tragedy which had befallen their ancestors' world.

THRUST OF SERIES

The stories will be strong personal, emotional ones. And they will be enhanced by the almost limitless wealth of elements which are unique to the Planet of the Apes: the fascination of seeing apes who are like humans; of a world that is an amalgam of medieval times and the near future; of relics from past civilizations and manifestations of future ones; of strange elements and natural forces. All this, plus physical excitement, danger and tension will be present, but the stories will always be about people. They will be about the two astronauts, Galen, and other living, thinking and feeling animals - human and ape. The thrust will be personal. There are also the overtones, the implicit and explicit comments on what the world was and what it has become - the philosophies of Galen and other intellectuals which will add yet another special and challenging element. We do not wish to pit man against ape - the enemy is those apes, who perverted by fear and prejudiced hatred have assumed dictatorial power. There will be ape heroes as well as ape villains, and human villains as well as human heroes. By reflection, important humanistic attitudes - those most admired by Americans today - will be present as an unstated overlay, an enrichment to the drama, suspense, comedy and tragedy which will be part and parcel of this most unique of all environments for meaningful entertainment..... the PLANET OF THE APES.