VO

FAR OFF IN THE DISTANT SKIES OF WORLDS UNKNOWN THERE FLIES A SHIP CALLED THE KURGAN. ABOARD, SOME OF THE TOUGHEST SONS OF GUNS FOR HIRE THIS WILD UNIVERSE WILL EVER KNOW. THEY ARE THE MISERY LOVES COMPANY.

(theme?)

VO

The Misery Loves Company just jettisoned from their ship, the Kurgan, in an escape pod and were captured by The Imperial Union of Gladiators. Though their first instinct was to prepare for bloody, take-no-prisoners combat, AHAB says he has a plan...

BULLHORN

Alright you butterballs, get that ship open.

VO

The Gladiators have the ship surrounded in the interior of their massive pirate barge. Their leader, Bullhorn, could be loosely described as "A Fat Guy Wearing Lingerie and a viking helmet." Think Zardoz, but with a less beautiful mane of hair. And, keep in mind, I never said he was wearing the viking helmet on his head.

(CROWD OF GLADIATORS)

AYE AYE, BULLHORN.

BULLHORN

And get that Fork guy over here.

VO

Bullhorns army of unionized aliens got to work on the main door of the Kurgan with their tools when the door opened on its own. Ahab and Bernie both stepped out and into the midst of the working proud.

BERNIE

What ya'll want. I'm hungry.

AHAB

Can we help you with anything?

BULLHORN

Where's your third guy. Didn't you say there were three?

FORK

Oh yeah uh, oh man hey guys where's Clyde

AHAB

That's real funny, Clyde.

FORK

Heh.. uh... Oh man are you goofin' or...

BULLHORN

YOU'RE Clyde?

FORK

Nah man he's goofin.

BULLHORN

You sold yourself? I don't get it. Hey though, all good for me! GET THESE THREE TO THEIR CELL.

(CROWD)

AYE AYE BULLHORN

VO

Ahab, Bernie and... Clyde? were moved into a holding cell while they were transported to the Planet Of A Thousand Trials via the barbarian barge. This gave them ample time to give Fork his due.

FORK

Man wow you guys sure are sore about this whole thing.

AHAB

You sold us out to the Gladiators, *FORK*.

FORK

Yeah but jeez louise it wasn't like they killed you. What happened to Clyde anyway?

BERNIE

I ate him.

FORK

Wh...wha?

BERNIE

I dunno what you don't get about it Fork. I. Ate. Clyde.

FORK

You ate him?

AHAB

Congratulations Bernie, it took half your life and a billion miles of intergalactic travel, but you finally found someone dumber than you.

BERNIE

Ya'll don't give me enough credit. But hear this now, Forkster, you don't do what we say and I'm gonna eat you too. Gonna be a lot less pleasant than it was for my good buddy Clyde though.

FORK

I figured you guys would have had some kinda, I dunno, some kinda plan or something.

BERNIE

Ahab did, but it was dumb so I just ate Clyde.

AHAB

It wasn't dumb.

FORK

How did that *solve* the... problem... Wow man you guys are really bumming me out and like you know I'm a pretty jolly guy all things considered.

BERNIE

If I was that gross lookin' I'd probably just eat myself heh heh

FORK

Dang Bernie. Jeez.

BERNIE

I'm just burstin' yer balls man.

AHAB

Alright, so here's whats gonna happen. These guys take their captures into cage matches, they bet on winners, that sort of thing. All we gotta do is each survive our first round. Or, I guess Fork, all you have to do is survive your first round. Bernie and I are gonna slide on through there. They do a little payout/awards thing before a second wave. That's when we're gonna bust out.

FORK

How?

AHAB

We're going to bust out.

FORK

How though?

AHAB

By busting out, I don't know what to tell you. Trust me. It's gonna be easy as pie.

BERNIE

Ding dong done.

FORK

Ding dong done?

BERNIE

Yeah, you bust out. Ding dong done.

FORK

I'm... gonna go think about my life.

BERNIE

I never do that, too depressing.

AHAB

What do you have to be sad about?

BERNIE

Genocide and stuff. I miss being around other Akolytes. We had a pretty good thing going. We actually had a way cooler gladiator thing.

AHAB

Oh, yeah, I guess that's fair. Sorry man.

BERNIE

It's okay, you saved some of us...

AHAB

I hear you.

VO

The group sat in relative silence for quite awhile until the capture barge finally reached the Gladiators' battle planet. Here, our heroes would be put to the ultimate test. One of the Gladiators' goons came to retrieve the first of them.

GOON

Alright Clyde, you're up first.

FORK

My name is Fork

GOON

We'll put it on your tombstone, out you go.

FORK

Man I'm so bummed about this you guys.

BERNIE

Sorry Clyde!

(Door opens, shuts)

AHAB

Alright, he's definitely dead. Once we kill whatever, we're gonna free the beast and call the Kurgan.

BERNIE

The beast? That's real funny.

AHAB

Don't try to improvise like on the moon.

BERNIE

Oh don't worry I'm *all done* trying to improve your dumb plans, except for how I improved this dumb plan.

AHAB

Always a wise guy, Bernie.

BERNIE

Ahab, I'm the brains of the outfit.

AHAB

You don't even *wear* an outfit. Gross naked living mountain with an eyepatch.

BERNIE

Would you cover up a beefy bod like this? I don't know why you hide your other arms. I'd have those two guys out and toned like a boss. At least the robot one.

AHAB

Do you think I like having one of my "GROSS ARMS" be replaced by a bunch of metal?

BERNIE

Well... I know you wish it hadn't happened. We all do.

AHAB

Yeah.

BERNIE

Just, it's cool.

AHAB

Yeah.

BERNIE

Sorry to bring it up.

AHAB

I just gotta stay focused.

BERNIE

I know.

GOON walks back up.

GOON

Bernie! My man, we got a hell of a fight out there for you. You're up.

BERNIE

Just so you know, when we break out of here, I'm gonna use your head as a beer mug.

GOON

No one breaks out of the Gladiator Planet. No one ever has, no one ever will.

BERNIE

Finally, some stakes to the story!

AHAB

Stick to it Bernie.

BERNIE

You just watch ol' Bernie work, Ahab. Learn a thing or two.

AHAB

Whatever.

VO

A short time later Ahab was led off to the pre-fight check, to insure he was hiding no weapons nor given an unfair advantage in his fight. The Gladiators' planet of a thousand trials was a galactically revered event, and there were explicit checks in place to insure that no bullshit was to occur due to great One-Mind-Two-Thousand-Bodies incident of the decade prior.

DOCTOR

Get that slave stripped down now. Let's see, standard biped organic lifeform, approx. 5'11"... Oh, this is interesting, two vestigial arms folded up behind the head here. Care to extend those for me? (Gross sound effect). Oh, nice, over your shoulders, I like that. Never seen this species before. One... made of bio-organic tech. Took a bad swing with a blade, looks like. That accurate?

AHAB

Someone got too friendly.

DOCTOR

Well, he clears for no weapons. Two eyes, both alike in dignity, black as the devil in the pale moonlight... Ahab is it?

AHAB

It is.

DOCTOR

Well, how would you rank your agility?

AHAB

High.

DOCTOR

I'm recommending him for swords. The bio-tech arm will play well. Keep those things extended, I like how spidery-you look with them out. What should we call him? The... Spider? Man-Spider?

AHAB

I'll stick with Ahab.

DOCTOR

Gonna kill your marketability post-mortem, but maybe it'll stick with the weirdos. Get these clothes on and get him out there.

VO

Little did they know that Ahab was one of the most revered swordsmen in the galaxy. Trained from birth by a silent group of warrior monks, Ahab had only taken one loss in his long fighting history. And he didn't talk about it. He was lead into a broad room filled with hand-made debris and handed two short swords. Across the room was his opponent, a giraffe like behemoth with arms as long and as dangly as overcooked spaghetti.

GERBER

WELCOME TO HELL, JERKASS.

AHAB

Ok.

VO

The Giraffe bodied warrior raised his swords into the air, as if to call out to the crowd. Since these fights were all broadcast instead of attended, this was met with a long, painful silence. Ahab sweat profusely in the awkwardness.

AHAB

How do you know they're cheering?

GERBER

They always cheer. I've killed almost 100 of you dandy-haired garbage bags.

AHAB

Kinda awkward though, isn't it?

GERBER

You'll know soon enough, when I turn you into nothing but a meaty butt stump.

AHAB

Also, dandy-haired? I'm completely hairless. I practically have scales.

GERBER

Taste the might of GERBER.

VO

With that, the apparently named... "gerber" launched into a volley of strikes and slashes on Ahab, who deftly dodged the whole array. Ducking, dashing, he was a flurry of avoidance.

GERBER

I've cut the eyes out of a million just like you.

AHAB

I don't even need mine.

GERBER

You mock GERBER?

AHAB

No, I'm just better. I'll fight completely blindfolded. Here, let me have a piece of your shirt.

GERBER

You'll surely die, skin-face.

AHAB

Maybe. But wouldn't it look great for you to topple someone who is so clearly mocking your might?

GERBER

FINE!

VO

As Gerber The Long Neck tore at his shirt, Ahab simply walked up and stabbed him.

GERBER

HRK

AHAB

Woops, slipped.

VO

Ahab turned to the imaginary audience and tried a similar hand raising technique, but it felt quiet and weird, so he tried to move around the arena looking for a place to sit. Everything looked too high, but he tried to sit on a smaller piece. He kind of started to slide off, so he tried to transition into a laying down type pose. It was very uncomfortable. He didn't know if the galaxy wide tele-cast was still airing. He tried to look cool but the clothes they had given him were also a little large. As he sat awkwardly on the debris he realized it was making him look kind of fat. Luckily, after awhile, someone came to get him.

AHAB

Oh thank God.

GOON

That was a pretty lame win you got back there. Gerber made us a lot of money.

AHAB

Sorry...?

GOON

We gotta get you ready for round 2.

VO

As Ahab walked down a long, dark hallway there were monitors showing other fights. He caught a glimpse of Fork standing triumphantly over the bodies of several dead aliens.

AHAB

What the hell?

GOON

Your friend Clyde has proven an excellent warrior.

AHAB

Oh yeah, uh... Clyde, yeah. Yeah he's uh... a notable... warrior?

VO

This made no sense to Ahab whatsoever.

AHAB

That makes a lot of sense.

VO

A short wait later and Ahab was in a new combat arena. Bernie entered shortly afterwards.

BERNIE

Hey, great news! When you kill something, it still dies! Shoot man. I was worried it would change.

AHAB

Did you see Fork?

BERNIE

Nah, he's probably dead. Let's get ready to do the thing, if you know what I mean.

AHAB

No he killed like 50 dudes.

BERNIE

50 dudes?

AHAB

Swear it, saw it on the screen, like at least 50 dudes.

VO

Fork then entered the stadium.

BERNIE

FORK, Ahab says you killed like 50 dudes.

FORK

Yeah wow I never knew I had insatiable bloodlust but wow man. I guess we all have precious gifts you know.

AHAB

Yeah... precious gifts. So, something is wrong here. This is usually a short awards ceremony, but the escort I had just said we were doing a second round. This isn't right. We're going to have to execute the plan anyway. So, listen Fork, when Bernie goes down, you go down, alright? It's gonna get messy in here.

FORK

I can probably just handle it myself. I got to keep this hammer and uh, I gotta say it's really workin for me.

AHAB

Stick to the plan.

FORK

Alright whatever. At least now I know what it is.

VO

Three other champions entered the arena, all armed to the teeth.

AHAB

Okay, confirmed, this is for sure a trap.

BULLHORN (OVER PA)

ALRIGHT GUYS, SORRY TO TELL YOU, BUT THIS IS A TRAP.

BERNIE

Nice call, Ahab!

BULLHORN

 I JUST GOT A BIG PAYDAY TO MAKE SURE YOU IDIOTS DONT LEAVE HERE ALIVE. ANYWAY, HERE'S THE GUYS THAT ARE GONNA KILL YOU. SEE YA!

BERNIE

They think they can kill us with guns! and bullets!

FORK

Uh... they can.. though?

AHAB

Don't worry Fork. They're not the only ones who decided to cheat today.

BERNIE

ALRIGHT suckers, LET'S WRASSLE.

VO

Will Ahab's plan still work? Will Forks newfound murderous bloodlust ruin the machinations our Misery Loves Company has set forth? FOUND OUT NEXT TIME, ON EPISODE 3: A FORK IN THE ROAD, OR, HARD TIMES COME AGAIN NO MORE.