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 managed to return to their ship. Not a moment later, they found themselves targeted once again.

KURGAN

We are receiving a transmission from the oncoming ship.

AHAB

Play it. Clyde, get those engines hot.

CLYDE

On it.

KURGAN

It is Triple Sevens Mercenary Army Warlord Magna.

AHAB

What?

WARLORD

Is this the Misery Loves Company?

VO

The Warlords' spidery visage once again graced the Kurgans main screen.

AHAB

YES! It's still us, please don't blow us up.

WARLORD

General Bloodstorm was afraid someone might have attacked and stolen the Kurgan.

AHAB

Well, they almost did, and I guess... well, it's a whole thing. Should we just dock up?

WARLORD

Yes, I think that would do nicely. I'm also afraid of our communications being... intercepted. There's a lot going on right now Ahab.

AHAB

You're telling us. We'll go stationary, extend your bridge and we'll meet on your ship.

WARLORD

Other way around. I can't trust anything right now.

AHAB

Well... alright.

VO

Ahab looked around the Kurgan, which was in complete disarray following the last days' events. It made him nervous to have someone important onboard.

AHAB

Just, you know. Usually we're a lot cleaner.

WARLORD

You're worried about a mess on your spaceship?

AHAB

Just, yeah, meet here. Kill your engines.

WARLORD

See you in a moment.

KURGAN

Triple Sevens Mercenary Army Warlord Magna has ended her broadcast.

AHAB

Thanks Kurgan. Scan that ship, as much as you can without them knowing. Clyde, get a gun on you. Bernie, go to your room.

BERNIE

C'mon I'm good with people

AHAB

I don't want to see you right now.

BERNIE

Sensitive Sally over here.

AHAB

OUT.

VO

Bernie growled and headed to the bottom floor of the ship.

AHAB

I'm gonna flush him off this boat Clyde.

CLYDE

He didn't mean anything. You know how he is around goons and guns.

AHAB

It really burns my ass Clyde. I just need him away from me for a minute.

CLYDE

I hear you.

AHAB

I'm not saying I regret picking him up, but sometimes I really regret picking him up.

VO

The Kurgan and Warlords ship slowly began to approach each other, until Warlords' ship bridged the passageway between her stealthy modern carrier and their space junk.

WARLORD

Wow, you weren't kidding about the mess.

AHAB

Our heavy gunner, Bernie, he sheds dirt and rock like a... I don't know, like a thing that does that.

WARLORD

Is he an Akolyte?

AHAB

Yeah, he stuck with us after that mess.

WARLORD

Interesting. Where is he?

AHAB

It's best he's not here right now. What's going on with you and the Sevens?

WARLORD

Much like your ship, It's a bit of a mess I'm afraid. Since Bloodstorm retired we've had a lot of trouble with pretty much everything, from people breaking contracts, spies, insurrections, spider-lice, scurvy...

CLYDE

Nothing new there.

WARLORD

The spider-lice were definitely new. In fact they seemed specifically engineered just to attack us at night. Mostly.

AHAB

When did you join?

WARLORD

It's my understanding that General Bloodstorm brought me in to replace... well, you. And then he jumped right off board the second I was comfortable.

AHAB

We did kind of blow a hole in the leadership.

WARLORD

It's hard enough keeping a merc army together when everything is good, much less after... all of that.

AHAB

I hope you don't blame us for it. We finished our contracts. It was just time to go.

WARLORD

I barely even know who you are. I turned to Bloodstorm for help and he told me to take it to you, right after he said never to talk to him about work again. You know, you really made an impression on that old bag of blood.

AHAB

He was a good leader. I learned a lot about killin' it all from him.

WARLORD

So say we all. Mm. Well, it's like this. We were infiltrated by something, somebody, a person, a group, I don't know. They kidnapped a few of our tech guys, some engineers, another Warlord, and they got them working on some new AI tech from what we gather. Obviously we don't want that happening.

AHAB

Trust me, you don't.

WARLORD

I know this isn't really the time but... someday, I need to hear about what happened to your--

AHAB

Again I say, trust me, you don't.

WARLORD

Someday. So we have three sites we need hit simultaneously. I can't trust the 7's on this. I don't know who's part of it or what, that's why we're meeting on your ship in the first place. That cruisers' big, but I don't know where to go where whoever they are can't hear me. Here's what needs to happen. I need the Warlord rescued, alive and able to talk. I need whatever AI-project they've managed to build destroyed, and I need a principle actor dead, along with some data retrieval. I'd like some of those techs saved, but to be honest with you they're expendable. I don't care how you do them, but I need them all hit at the same time.

AHAB

Do you have more specifics?

WARLORD

I can have them sent to the Kurgan now if you're interested.

CLYDE

How's it pay.

WARLORD

Good. It's triple-7's money.

AHAB

Could you give us a second?

WARLORD

My ears are terrible anyway. But keep in mind, these eyes read lips beautifully. And beautiful lips like yours even better

AHAB

Well... thanks?

VO

AHAB and CLYDE moved away from Warlord Magna and spilt the beans.

CLYDE

We need Bernie up here.

AHAB

No we don't. He doesn't make decisions anyway, you're my second in command here.

CLYDE

He still should have a say. But whatever. I'm in. We need the money.

AHAB

I know. So you're good with getting wrapped up in merc army bullshit again?

CLYDE

We need the money.

AHAB

Alright.

VO

Ahab turned back to the now standing Warlord, her many eyes darting to the trophies around the ship.

WARLORD

This is a magnificent skull. What creature is this?

CLYDE

That's actually it's b--

AHAB

Taken from a mighty beast, off the second moon of EMH-5. Name unknown.

WARLORD

Interesting. I assume you're in.

AHAB

We are.

WARLORD

What about your rock-beast.

AHAB

He does what we say.

WARLORD

I see, I see. What do you boys do for fun on this ship anyway, it looks pretty barren. Any friends, any... lovers?

AHAB

(Nervously) ah, haha, no. No lovers.

WARLORD

You, Clyde?

CLYDE

I love nobody.

AHAB

He always says that. He doesn't mean it.

CLYDE

I do.

AHAB

But we, you know... we don't spend a lot of time here. Why do you ask?

WARLORD

I don't know you, Ahab. I don't know the first thing about you or your crew. I'm not interrogating you, I just wanted to know what you're like. How did Clyde turn into a smoke monster? Why does a gigantic rock-beast have the highest pitched voice I've ever heard? And you, Ahab, what do you want in this world? What are you about?

AHAB

Right now, I want to get paid. And whatever fear I have, whatever inside me doesn't want to do the things I'm best at, they're all nothing in the face of it.

WARLORD

Aw Ahab, I thought you might be more interesting than that. Money. That's it?

AHAB

Maybe I am? Interesting?

WARLORD

Are you asking me? I have no idea! You're a hot mess Ahab. I'll have the mission parameters sent to your ship. Until I see your enormous, delicate, beautiful eyes again... farewell.

AHAB

Shyeahboo.

WARLORD

Sh... mm?

CLYDE

He said, Sure, Yeah, you too, Bye, and laughed at the compliment all at once because you made him nervous.

WARLORD

Ooookay. Good luck to you.

CLYDE

Thanks

(Footsteps, door shuts)

CLYDE

You blew it.

AHAB

I'll throw you out of the ship.

CLYDE

"Money". That speech you gave, wow. "I DO IT ALL FOR THE BANK NO MATTER WHAT". You're pathetic.

AHAB

WE DO NEED MONEY

CLYDE

She asked you to impress her and you said "dur, I like dollarrrrs".

AHAB

Kurgan, set a course for Cobb.

KURAGN

Done. Shall we proceed immediately?

AHAB

As soon as possible.

CLYDE

Seriously.

AHAB

I need to talk to him. You go tell Bernie whats going on. I'm gonna go over the data Magna sent. Maybe try and talk to Bloodstorm.

CLYDE

He's gonna be pissed

AHAB

Don't care.

VO

Ahab turned to work at what was normally Clyde's place in the ship.

AHAB

Kurgan, give me every bit of data you can throw at me about these planets. All of it.

KURGAN

Of course Company member Ahab.

(SFX: Door, elevator.)

VO

Down below deck, where Bernie stayed on the Kurgan, Clyde found Bernie picking out bullets from his scaly, rock like skin.

CLYDE

You took a lot of bullets back there.

BERNIE

Yeah, thought about cocooning up but it's not that bad.

CLYDE

Well, the boss man sent me to tell you what's happening.

BERNIE

I already heard.

CLYDE

You did?

BERNIE

Just had the Kurgan open up my coms. Listen.

AHAB (Muffled)

Fatass rock skin piece of back water star system trash.

BERNIE

He never remembers I can do that. And my voice is not that high pitched. I'm just easily excited.

CLYDE

You really shouldn't have killed that guy. You know you're gonna have to apologize to him or he's never gonna get over it.

BERNIE

I'll eat it like always. That's what I'm here for, ain't it, to make sure everything isn't his fault.

CLYDE

He just can't think of anything but "the next mission". It's a fault sure, but that's just who he is.

BERNIE

I know, man. Sure, maybe he woulda said, maybe he just wanted to kill us in the first place. Gladiators ain't to be trusted. And doggone it he left Fork back there.

CLYDE

Fork is an asshole.

BERNIE

Yeah but he works for US! No dickbag left behind. Whatever, ain't my ship, ain't my fault, ain't my problem.

CLYDE

Did you hear him fumble it with the Warlord

BERNIE

heheh. Now that was almost worth the hassle. Almost. Man this one is really in there. (SFX: Hammer)

CLYDE

Do you feel that?

BERNIE

Naw, all our skins on Akolyte is like this. Too much radiation from the fact that we lived on, whats Ahab call it, a trash planet. We grow like trees man. Way way way down deep in here we got like, flimsy skin. Gross as all hell to be honest. I don't recommend lookin' that up. Like a messed up skinless dog, man. How about your gassy flesh prison. Do you feel anything at all? Ever?

CLYDE

More or less. It's hard to describe. When I'm like this, that is, more or less corporeal, it almost feels normal, kind of like I'm in low gravity. And I always have my abs clenched.

BERNIE

You're definitely a clencher.

CLYDE

Oh, we're headed to Cobb Gnarly's place on Sea-Bear Port too. Sooo...

BERNIE

Oh great, FUN FUN FUN. Why the world would Ahab subject us to that. He's just gonna be mad we blew up that moon.

CLYDE

Not my fault, not my problem.

BERNIE

Right on smokey.

KURGAN

Company members Bernie and Clyde, we've arrived at Sea-Bear port.

BERNIE

Speak of the devil, and our ship will take us there. Oh, Kurgan, give us wings, take us far far away from here.

KURGAN

Company member Bernie, I'm afraid Company member Ahab isn't allowing me to plot another course yet.

BERNIE

But why though.

KURGAN

Company member Ahab said: "Don't let those idiots do anything with this ship unless I say so"

BERNIE

He gets smarter every day.

KURGAN

Good luck, friendos.

CLYDE

Thanks Kurgan.

VO

Just who is Cobb Gnarly, and what does Ahab want from him? Why are Clyde and Bernie so annoyed at having to see him? All these answers and more on The Misery Loves Company episode 5, Our Gnarliest Friend, OR, Dirty Old Town.