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

After learning that their former employers, the Triple 7 Mercenary Army, has been compromised by an unknown party, the Misery Loves Company was tasked with saving the day once more. Before they launch their attack, the boys settle down on Cobb Gnarly's space port, Golden Bear. The three company members prepare to leave the Kurgan.

AHAB

Kurgan, don't let anyone else on this ship without asking me first.

KURGAN

Understood, Company member Ahab.

CLYDE

So what's the plan here. Since you unilaterally decided we're going to talk to the most annoying man in space.

AHAB

We need some repairs on the ship Clyde, and if anyone can figure out who wants us dead, it's him.

BERNIE

Listen Ahab, I'm sorry. I made a dumb call. I'm sorry I killed that guy. I shoulda let you do it.

AHAB

Appreciate it Bernie. Just keep that in mind next time.

BERNIE

Alright.

AHAB

Now listen, I need you two to get another escape shuttle.

CLYDE

With what money?

BERNIE

Maybe Clyde can strip for it, all the way down to the ashes.

CLYDE

I don't dance.

AHAB

It's money fronted by the Warlord. Just do it. Find something useful and don't go to any bars, any clubs, or anything that's going to distract you or make you drink away the money. I don't want to be on this stupid asteroid any longer than I have to be.

VO

Ahab handed Clyde a freshly filled card loaded with interstellar money.

CLYDE

We'll get it done.

AHAB

Good. Meet on the ship afterwards.

VO

With that, Ahab stormed away off the ship and out of sight. The second he was gone, Bernie turned to Clyde.

BERNIE

Bar first, work later?

CLYDE

Bar now, work never.

VO

And off they went, to drink away the money, get distracted, and ultimately once more disappoint their friend and leader. Bernie threw open the doors to a familiar bar, deep in the bowels of the Asteroid known as Sea-Bear. (SFX: Door open, bar sounds.)

MALINDA

BERNIE!

BERNIE

Oh hey there you sweet mess of a woman. How you doin'?

VO

Bernie was greeted instantly by a familiar friend, his most favorite bar maid Malinda. She was an ungodly disaster of a woman but very representative of her race. She was most easily described as a 7 foot tall cubist painting.

BERNIE

Let's get a drink or two and talk about a love that never ends. You know how much I love a woman with 90 degree angles.

MALINDA

You don't come around here for months and think I'm still gonna have you hittin' on me.

BERNIE

Like anyone else is gonna do it.

(SFX: Smack)

BERNIE

You always know just what to say.

MALINDA

How you doin' Clyde.

CLYDE

Soon to be better. Don't you worry.

MALINDA

I've missed you boys so much. You ain't here to start anything are you?

BERNIE

Maybe! Hey guy, over there.

GUY

Yeah?

BERNIE

You wanna start something?

GUY

Is that a threat or a question.

BERNIE

Nah, I just wanna start somethin'.

GUY

Yeah! I guess I could start somethin'.

BERNIE

Malinda, I'm here to start somethin'.

MALINDA

Time for my break anyway. Don't be gone so long this time, huh?

BERNIE

I'll try!

CLYDE

Are you really starting something.

GUY

I'm definitely starting something. Hey other guy, catch! (SFX: Glass breaking)

BERNIE

YEEHAW! (SFX: Disaster)

VO

Ahab, ignorant of his two companions' immediate detour into intoxication and starting something, stood patiently in a small waiting area impatiently tapping his foot. Mr. Cobb Gnarly seemed busier every time he came to see him. Finally, after growing violently angry he had ever been born, he was brought into Cobb's office. Cobb Gnarly was a tall, lanky man with a blisteringly apparent fetish for money and power. His gilded office reflected that nature.

COBB

Mr. Ahab, my good buddy, my best pal. My soldier of fortune.

AHAB

Hello Cobb.

COBB

What brings you to Sea-Bear Port? My friendly little asteroid away from home. Why, is it to tell me that instead of retrieving the irreplaceable cargo I sent you to get on a little ol' moon, you instead *blew up* said moon? That instead of calling me to tell me you annihilated said astrological body, you went out of your way to PRETEND you'd delivered said *irreplaceable cargo*? Mr. Ahab, my finest, most beautiful soldier. What could *possibly* be the reason for your visit. Oh, do have a candy Mr. Ahab, please, help yourself to my ports' riches.

AHAB

Listen, Cobb, I'm sorry.

COBB

Oh good golly miss sorry, thank you for the condolences.

AHAB

That-- listen, okay, a lot of things went wrong there.

COBB

You still had enough time for a detour over at the Gladiators' war-planet or whatever they're calling it now. I saw your fight, actually.

AHAB

I hope you bet on me.

COBB

Call it spite. I lost some money but I felt emotionally vindicated. I want you to tell me what happened.

AHAB

A lot. Basically, top to bottom, the whole thing was rigged against you. The cargo, shipment, delivery, whatever you want to call it, it wasn't there. I even had one of our other guys look for it after. And the moon was in the middle of a blockade we happened to slip by without realizing. And, listen. That's just how it started. That's just the first hour. And, by the way, we did not *choose* to go to the Gladiators' planet.

COBB

Trust is my most valuable resource, Mr. Ahab, And you, my bug-eyed wonderbra, you stole a whole lick of my most valuable resource, which, need I remind you once again, is trust.

AHAB

I know what I did. That's why I'm here. Listen, Cobb. I know it's a loss for you. I want to make it up. I've got a lucrative offer, and I want us to be even.

COBB

I'm listening.

VO

Unfortunately, Bernie and Clyde weren't making nearly as much progress on their side of the port.

(SFX: Guns, war, horrors)

BERNIE

My god, what have we done.

CLYDE

WE? What have WE done?

BERNIE

Drink first, work never he said. DRINK FIRST WORK NEVER HE SAID.

CLYDE

I got an idea.

BERNIE

I'm listening.

CLYDE

What if we just steal an escape raft while this is happening. We can just dock it up with the Kurgan and pretend we aren't the dumbest people here.

BERNIE

Your body may be gone but your big ol' brain is as present as ever. Let's go!

VO

And so, the two members of the Misery Loves Company who both believed their intellect rivaled or exceeded Ahab's, set off to rob a port full of pirates, mercenaries and thieves. Ahab's meeting looked even better by comparison.

COBB

The triple sevens, huh?

AHAB

Yeah. It's the data you've been looking for. We're supposed to be raiding these three compounds this person or group is running. We're supposed to bring all we can back to the sevens. I can lose a few things along the way. Word is whoever they are is working on some kind of AI-based weapon or something. Details are unknown.

COBB

My second most valuable commodity here *is* secrets.

AHAB

I just want you to poke around for me about something in particular. Someone tried to have us killed back on the Gladiator planet. I mean, besides the Gladiators. They paid them off to kill us. Big amount. Shouldn't be too hard to find, right?

COBB

I do the bare minimum of detective work, you give me some secrets from the 7's and this unknown third party, we're even. That's your deal?

AHAB

Well, yeah more or less.

COBB

I'm gonna say, yep, that's pretty much not gonna cover it. But I'm not gonna have you killed today, Mr. Ahab. You've done good work, maybe that speaks for you this time. But I want you to know, you ever knife my back in the dark again, I'm gonna make you wish I'd had the mercy to throw your ass into a sun. The furious hate-rage of a thousand angry pirates is gonna rain down on that bald ass head of yours. You're gonna be doing some favors for me, Mr. Ahab. Not today, not tomorrow. But they're coming.

AHAB

I understand.

COBB

Don't care if you do. It's in stone.

AHAB

I'll leave you to your... asteroid then.

COBB

Thank ya kindly.

VO

With that, Ahab was escorted out of the office, and back into the dirty, narrow interior streets of Sea-Bear Port. Cobb Gnarly picked up a phone and dialed up someone he knew.

COBB

We got some good things coming our way. Ahuh. I know. Yeah. The Misery Loves Company, The Triple Sevens, And you-know-who. Yep. THAT you-know-who.

VO

Ahab let out a mighty sigh of relief. Not only had he smoothed things over with a notoriously fickle jerk, he felt clear-headed about the future for the first time since they blew up a moon. He was ready to tackle anything.

AHAB

I'M READY, WORLD.

VO

Just then, an escape shuttle tore through the narrow corridor behind him. Behind that, Bernie came charging down the road. Behind him, a hoard of angry outlaws.

BERNIE

God have mercy, AHAB please run for your life. THIS AIN'T NO GAME.

AHAB

Haha! I don't even care! Sure!

VO

Still feeling the high of having succeeded at something for once, Ahab took off down the tunnel, Bernie close behind him. Shots rang out in their direction as Clyde docked the shuttle to the Kurgan. Ahab and Bernie slipped into the ship, and tore off into the great darkness of space. They felt a small thud as they undocked, but it was soon forgotten.

KURGAN

Something has struck our hull.

AHAB

Disregard it, Kurgan. We're alive and home free.

KURGAN

Understood, Company member Ahab.

BERNIE

Hot *damn* that was one successful trip. We didn't pay a dime for that shuttle! OR our drinks!

AHAB

You know what, congrats. I'm not even mad.

BERNIE

Must have been a good visit for you too!

VO

Clyde entered the main room of the Kurgan, floating up the ladder from the shuttle.

BERNIE

Clyde, Ahab ain't even mad!

CLYDE

This calls for a celebration. Drink now, work never.

BERNIE

Work sometimes, drink often.

AHAB

Drink, drink.

KURGAN

The new shuttle is now fully integrated with my systems.

AHAB

Good job, Kurgan. Any problems?

KURGAN

We will require maintenance to our life support systems soon.

BERNIE

Kurgan, report: Who is the best crew member.

KURGAN

It will forever be you, Company member Bernie. You have instructed me to say this always.

AHAB

Kurgan: over-ride his command. Who's the best crew member.

KURGAN

I like to think of myself as a fierce mother bear. You are all my beautiful children, and I would rip the flesh of those who opposed you, devour it, and defile their corpses with their own digested flesh.

BERNIE

Someday I'm gonna meet me a woman who says that and means it and I'm gonna be a happy man.

KURGAN

I have a question, Ahab.

AHAB

Ask away.

KURGAN

Earlier when discussing artificial intelligence with Triple Seven Mercenary Warlord Magna, you insinuated that it was a bad thing. Why?

AHAB

Well... There are Artificial minds all over the galaxy. It's really not that uncommon. It's not necessarily a bad thing. But you... ah, they're better than us. Organic life. In certain ways. Like, you don't have to deal with emotion. Or disease. You're just zeroes and ones. If one of those gets out of whack, whatever, flip the numbers, everythings fine. Oh, click click, my manic depression is gone. Let me just forget this person I loved who broke my soul in half. Let me just, oh, that's nice, it turns out I don't have a mother, or a father, who left me with a deep rooted set of psychological scars that can never heal. People, like us, when something happens when we're young, unless it heals fast it festers there. Think about a tree. Damage the bark when its young and this tiny scratch 50 years later becomes a 4 foot wide gap in the structure, it never looks right, it never... operates correctly. But you, Kurgan. You and your kind, you don't have those issues. You're smarter, those clouds, you don't have them. And if you put that brain into a body, or a computer, and tell it that it needs to wipe out a species, it doesn't say "Well, maybe when I feel better." It says "Okay. Here's how. I will now demonstrate." When bad people with unlimited resources give minds like yours unlimited access to the deadliest weapons in the galaxy, planets die. That's why it's bad. It's frowned upon to put AI in anything but isolated networks. Really, if people found out all the control we've given you...

BERNIE

Jeez. You okay, Ahab?

AHAB

I told you, I feel great!

KURGAN

I understand what you're saying Company member Ahab. My creator once told me that killing everything was a natural part of life. I still do not know what that meant, nor how it applies to me as a spaceship.

AHAB

Yeah... well...

KURGAN

But I would hesitate and think about it quite awhile before I flooded this ship with toxic gas.

CLYDE

Appreciated.

AHAB

Can you see if General Bloodstorm is available now?

KURGAN

I will attempt contact.

AHAB

What happened back there with you two anyway?

BERNIE

It was a sin of the flesh I'm afraid.

CLYDE

Bernie started something with a guy. That guy had friends, and his friends had friends, and those friends had guns, which as you saw had bullets, and they pointed them at us.

BERNIE

All that to say, I'd do it again.

CLYDE

All that to say, YOU'D do it again. Next time I'm letting you get thrown off the asteroid.

BERNIE

How did you manage not to get killed by ol' Gnarly?

AHAB

Worked out a deal. Don't worry about it.

CLYDE

Whenever you say that, I feel like I really need to worry about it.

AHAB

Really. It's not a big deal. We just have to do a couple of free jobs.

CLYDE

Sound too easy.

KURGAN

General Bloodstorm is responding.

AHAB

Put him on.

BLOODSTORM

Boys!

CLYDE

General.

AHAB

Hey, I had some questions for you.

BLOODSTORM

Well, I'd be damn near pleased to answer them, maybe.

AHAB

The warlord, Magna. How much do you know about her.

BLOODSTORM

Three things: One, she kills real good, two, she ain't a spider and I hope you didn't call her one.

AHAB

Woops.

BLOODSTORM

Three, and I don't say this lightly-- I want you to understand it loud and clear: If you were the son I never knew I wanted, she's the daughter I always wish I'd had. I picked that woman up out of a trash heap of a life and she has repaid that debt a thousand fold. I trust her implicitly.

AHAB

How come you didn't tell us about the trouble in the sevens?

BLOODSTORM

What the hell do I care about the triple sevens. I retired. I'm home free. I got my money, I got my glory, and now I got three houses on three different oceans and enough cash to pay for women half my age to give a shit about what kind of beer I drink. I keep in touch with Magna but that garbage don't cross my mind. If it falls apart, eat my ass, I don't care. As long as Magna's safe.

AHAB

But, if you had a guess, what's happened.

BLOODSTORM

Short and simple: people with too much money and not enough sense. AKA half the damn universe. Is that all you called to bother me about?

AHAB

Someone is also trying to kill us. Maybe. Might be related.

BLOODSTORM

Well, kill them first. Always remember, if they're dead, they won't come knockin', and if they do, kill 'em again. Send those assblasters right back to hell.

BERNIE

I wish you were my dad.

BLOODSTORM

And I'd be proud to abandon you at birth, you worthless trash.

BERNIE

How can I love someone so much.

AHAB

Well, I'm gonna send you some intel on what we're dealing with. If you think of anything we should know, or, I don't know. Just send us a line sometime if you think about it.

BLOODSTORM

Will do you burly cocksuckers. I'm out.

BERNIE

Bye daddy.

CLYDE

He's already gone.

BERNIE

(Sigh) I know.

AHAB

Alright. Clyde, since you already flew it, you take the new raft for your mission. Bernie, you keep the ship. You'll need to fly heavy. I'll get the other life raft. Kurgan, send all three the co-ordinates for the rendezvous. And listen up, I'm gonna run down each of the missions. You guys ready?

BERNIE

Ready and killing, Ahab.

CLYDE

Samesies.

AHAB

Perfect.

VO

The Company now faces their biggest task yet. An officially sanctioned triple-whammy on an unknown foe. A mission tailor made for our heroes. Will they succeed? Is it all a trap set by the very enemy they now run to face? Find out next time on The Misery Loves Company episode 6: It's what inside that counts, OR, Pretty Boy Floyd.