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

Years earlier. A younger Ahab squinting into a sun on a planet covered in jungle. A playground. A training dream land. Ahab wields a knife. He wanders through the forest, as silent as he can. Every leaf that crunches under his feet, every limb that brushes against him is an alarm. He is failing. He stops, listens. The trees blow but there is no other sound. He knows already he is caught. He waits for the strike. All four of his arms prepared to defend. The voice of his enemy, his mentor, is louder than thunder in the quiet.

DOM

You move without purpose. Weakness.

VO

Ahab, in the present day, leans against a burning tank. A wound on his leg bleeds, he can hear the dripping in the silence between guns firing. He smiles. There is no one to help. No one to fix his leg. No one to cover him. It's exactly what he was trained for. He'd caught this group by surprise. They were in exactly the positions the surveillance data Magna had secured said they'd be. The rest was now up to him. He pulls something off his vest. A clear orb, filled with something unknown. He clutches it in his hand, rolls to the side of the tank, and tosses it at the two men left defending the road.

(SFX: Explosion)

GOON 1

I can't see!

GOON 2

Fall back, fall back!

(SFX: Two bursts, two bodies falling)

VO

The smoke from the tank smells like gunpowder. Ahab limps away from it, hoping he can be far and away if it happens to explode. He waits in the woods nearby to see which direction any reinforcements will come from. He checks in with the others via a link with the Kurgan.

AHAB

Everything good?

BERNIE

Yeah I'm eatin'.

AHAB

During the mission?

BERNIE

As far as I'm concerned this *is* the mission.

AHAB

Whatever. Clyde?

CLYDE

Busy.

AHAB

Keep in touch.

VO

Another soldier came down the dirt road, armed and searching. He spots the dead by the carnage Ahab inflicted.

AHAB (In a whisper)

Kurgan, I'm letting out one of your eyes. Keep it on him.

KURGAN

Understood company member Ahab.

VO

Ahab released a small cycloptic drone from his vest. It flew silently around him, getting its bearings, then took off for the sky. Ahab flipped on a visor that fed him data captured by the Kurgan.

BERNIE

Ahab, Clyde, I'm about to make a lot of noise. Be ready on your planets. They're gonna know.

AHAB

Thanks for the uncharacteristic heads up.

BERNIE

Thank me when they're dead.

AHAB

Kill 'em all, Bernie.

VO

The man kicked at the corpses of his fallen comrades, and radioed something to someone else. He disappeared back down the road.

AHAB

Stay high, Kurgan.

KURGAN

You're clear to follow.

AHAB

Thanks.

VO

Ahab felt like he was reliving the entirety of his combat and stealth training. When he and his twin sister Ava were young, they had run off to Perhera, in hopes of joining the Warrior Monks there. Those were the hardest years of his life. He never heard from his parents again. Never found out what happened to them. They hadn't been cruel, or unjust. They simply didn't understand that which dwelled in the souls of their children. A priest on Perhera told he and Ava that they were cursed by a dead star that would ultimately crash into their lives. They both decided they would destroy the star first. He wasn't sure now if he believed it could be stopped.

KURGAN

Hide.

AHAB

On it.

KURGAN

In the trees.

VO

Ahab climbed up into the dense foliage that surrounded him. A small scouting party quickly converged on where he had been. The sun was setting here, whatever the planet was called. It seemed fast, but this was only to his advantage. The scouts talked as they passed.

GOON 1

The core's been hit.

GOON 2

What, by *one guy*?

GOON 1

Yeah, well *one guy* just killed our only tank.

GOON 2

Whatever. Keep looking.

KURGAN

Stay high.

VO

Ahab stuck to the trees, unfolding and using his smaller upper arms to keep his balance.

KURGAN

Keep going forward. They have a camp up ahead. I believe the captive Warlord is inside the hastily constructed building at the center of it. There are enough guns and people there to prevent any type of solo assault, especially considering your injury.

AHAB

Then we don't go at it that way.

KURGAN

What is your plan?

AHAB

Walk right in.

KURGAN

Company member Ahab, I don't believe that's a good choice.

AHAB

Then watch me and understand.

KURGAN

If you insist.

VO

Ahab moved from tree to tree, easy to do in the dense foliage that surrounded the enemy camp. The sun had set completely, the only light now coming from a large fire by the hacked together building they'd constructed. He could hear yelling coming from inside it. The scouts from earlier were returning to the fold, but they were on alert for him. Ahab made a circle around the camp, hanging the grenades he had used earlier on the trees like delicate Christmas ornaments. He set them all on a timer, and went deeper into the woods.

AHAB

I have to let you go now, Kurgan. Leave the rest to me.

KURGAN

Good luck.

VO

Ahab flipped the eye piece into his vest and dropped to the ground. He approached the encampment, emphasizing his limp. Hands in the air.

AHAB

I surrender. Hey, I'm coming in.

GUY 3

Holy shit

GUY 4

Get down!

AHAB

I'm down, I'm down. Hands up. I'm dying out here. Take me in.

VO

Some soldiers quickly leapt on him, taking off his vest, his shoes, all his weapons and everything else.

GRIPPER

Wowowowow, AHAB!

VO

Ahab looked up, and saw someone he vaguely remembered. He'd been a small time guy back in the 7's when he was onboard. Middle management for a merc army. He'd left shortly before Ahab did.

AHAB

Gripper?

GRIPPER

Yeah dude! Wowow, we been getting reports of attacks all over today. Didn't expect it was you guys. The 7's hitting back. That is genuinely surprising. How did we not know that?

GUY 4

Don't know. Must have been done back channel style. We got bugs all over the place there.

GRIPPER

Fascinating. wowowow. Ahab, how you been?

AHAB

Better. You guys blew my knee out.

GRIPPER

I see we did! I see, I see we took it right out from under you, much like Warlord Goofass in the building.

AHAB

Just so you know, I quit the sevens.

GRIPPER

Another twist! A lifelong soldier bailing on his buddies! Not sure I smell the truth in that.

AHAB

Wanted to run my own thing.

GRIPPER

You were always smart. I'm gonna be honest, I couldn't be bothered running anything more than this. I like other people taking the stress, I just want the paycheck.

AHAB

Me too.

GRIPPER

Ahab, listen, this ain't personal.

AHAB

I didn't know it was you. Trust me. But I get it.

GRIPPER

Yeah, well.

VO

Gripper reared back and kicked Ahab in the head so hard he felt like he was seeing through the cracks of time itself. He didn't lose consciousness for long but it was clear to him in his moments of clarity that to Gripper, this might actually be personal. He knew he was on borrowed time, and this hadn't exactly gone QUITE to plan yet. He focused his mind on trying to come back together. Something to cling to. Of course the first thing to come to mind was *him*. His old friend. He saw it through his own eyes, the way his memory seemed to have encapsulated the moment. The swords hitting together, not quite serious but not quite... not. Dusk. What was the smell? Like oranges. A grove on this empty space. He could see the mechanical workings of the body before him. Dependable was literally his first name. Or had he shed that name by then? Dependable Operations Manager. It was cute if you said it all.

DOM

I will tell you my philosophy. Power is knowing. Power is a step ahead. Power can revive the dead. Power can conquer hell itself.

VO

Ahab remembered how he felt knowing something this creation before him considered profound. Ahab always felt uncomfortable with this kind of personal honesty. He felt the urge to pick apart the words, tell him he thought Power was just a word people who wanted it but didn't have it used. What happened next?

AHAB

What about luck?

DOM

Luck is made. Not found.

VO

Ahab remembered he laughed, at the seriousness of the whole thing. He suddenly found his surroundings comical, almost. Then he was smoking. They had stopped. He had all four arms then. He remembered laying back, there were, what, six moons on that planet? Each seemed a different color. One had a ring. He thought he could see a distinct piece of rock within one. It was that close.

DOM

Ahab, I believe I created myself, that I gained the knowledge of self, in order to conquer. To build up and destroy. The impulse is what has driven me from a nail to a hammer.

AHAB

I just like the money.

DOM

The sniper you befriended, Clyde.

AHAB

What about him?

DOM

He would be useful. A good shot. Quiet.

AHAB

You gonna date him or something.

DOM

He should join us. For strength. For power.

VO

Ahab remembered looking over, DOM sitting there on a log. He looked at the way his body had been built, presumably by DOM himself. The smooth edges that led into hard, rough turns. He didn't look like anything, just shapes all smashed together. He didn't even know why Dom took to him the way he did. Maybe he was just lonely? Maybe he saw something in Ahab that fed into whatever he had that qualified as an ego. For now, Ahab focused on this one thing, Dom looking at the moon. Just focusing on that, trying to bring his brain back down to earth. Dom and the moon. He looked around. The fuzziness wearing off. Focus. Focus. Focus. He was in a cage. Was this the Warlord?

AHAB

Who are you?

SOLOMON

You are wasted, Ahab. Did he melt your brain or something? How many times do I have to pretend like that's the first time you've asked. Yes, a Warlord. Solomon.

AHAB

That hot trash gave me a full on concussion didn't he.

SOLOMON

You've been calling him a buttplug under your breath.

AHAB

Let's make some promises. One, I'm getting you out of here. Two, you will tell no one about that.

SOLOMON

Yeah, works for me.

AHAB

My friends are jackass toolboxes and I can't deal with their bullshit today.

SOLOMON

Sure, whatever, but you're not getting out of here with me. I don't know if you can see clearly in here because of all the dark, but my legs are gone man.

AHAB

Shot yours too?

SOLOMON

No, they cut them off. That's not a euphemism, they literally cut off my legs.

AHAB

What the shit, dude.

SOLOMON

Well I mean, they were gonna make me eat them but I cried too much.

AHAB

Yeesh.

SOLOMON

Yeah, so I'm a baby for not wanting to eat my own legs.

AHAB

You should leave out the crying. Just, you know. Be cool.

SOLOMON

Yeah I'll be cool. What are you gonna do though.

AHAB

Just, fill me in, what the hell is going on here.

SOLOMON

Caught my ship. Killed my dudes, drug me out here. Tried to get info on some crap I didn't know. Some kind of Superweapon, old leadership, I have no idea. General Squanch only promoted me to Warlord like a few months ago, I think. They were going to kill me and then they started getting antsy about some attack. That was all you?

AHAB

I'm a one man... shooting machine. I guess. Man my head is on fire. I gotta stay in the moment. I need Gripper in here.

SOLOMON

I can manage that.

AHAB

Do you have anything, is there anything in here that can kill someone.

SOLOMON

My legs over in the corner. That's all the food they gave me.

AHAB

That is PERFECT.

SOLOMON

Yeah I know, nothing to use.

AHAB

Nah man, your leg bone.

SOLOMON

So you think you're gonna kill a heavily armed group of pipe-hitting dickbags with my femur.

AHAB

Well, yeah. What time is it?

SOLOMON

IT'S NIGHT. I DON'T HAVE LEGS OR A WATCH.

AHAB

Damn, sorry. Jeez. Just get Gripper in here.

SOLOMON

GRIPPER

AHAB

That's it?

VO

As called, Gripper entered the tent.

GRIPPER

Wowowow, Solomon, I totally forgot we were gonna blow you up today. We should get on that.

AHAB

Tell me what time it is.

GRIPPER

Uh, it's.. what? It's about a quarter of eight.

AHAB

Ugh, you're one of those people

GRIPPER

Those what?

AHAB

Just say the time. What does "quarter of eight" even mean. 7:45? 8:45? 8:15? I don't know. I have no idea what that means. WHAT TIME is it. You look at a watch and you say it's damn quarter of, cut that shit out. SAY THE TIME.

GRIPPER

I didn't kick you hard enough. It's 8:09.

AHAB

That's not even a quarter of anything.

GRIPPER

I said ABOUT a quarter of eight. You know what, no, forget the plans, I'm dragging you both out of here.

AHAB

Wait, wait. Wait thirty more seconds.

GRIPPER

No.

AHAB

Yeah, just, ... just a second.

VO

AHAB crawled over to the corner of the cell and got Solomon's leg, desperately pulling out a sharp piece of the leg bone.

AHAB

I'm gonna stab you through the neck with this, by the way.

GRIPPER

You're the weirdest dude I ever met, Ahab.

AHAB

Thanks. Oh, and I'm sorry.

GRIPPER

About what?

AHAB

About killing every single guy outside this building and also ruining your plans and also killing you with this leg bone.

GRIPPER

Whatever. Why did you surrender in the first place, you knew what was going to happen.

AHAB

Because, my old pal! I wanted to be *inside* the building.

GRIPPER

Wowowow, well, you did it.

AHAB

Exactly.

VO

Just then, the grenades on the perimeter of the compound went off. First, a dozen flashes, bright enough to wake the sun. After that, only fire. As Ahab planned, the cell holding he and Solomon was the strongest, most secure part of the camp. When the dust settled, Ahab lightly kicked the door to the cell, which fell open. Gripper was holding his eyes, and his armor was on fire.

GRIPPER

You *asshole!*

AHAB

I said sorry, damn dude.

VO

Ahab lifted the leg bone and drove it into Grippers' neck. He turned back to Solomon and lifted his legless body onto his back, supporting it with his secondary arms.

AHAB

Alright. You know where they might have my stuff?

SOLOMON

They put it over there, by the fire.

AHAB

I don't see it.

SOLOMON

The other fire.

AHAB

Oh, there it is. Thanks buddy.

SOLOMON

You used to be a warlord, right?

AHAB

Yeah... that was another life though.

SOLOMON

I didn't know what they were supposed to be like until just now.

AHAB

Hey, thanks man.

SOLOMON

No problem, I guess.

VO

Ahab set Solomon down, put all his gear back on, and called up the Kurgan.

AHAB

If you could, Kurgan, bring the shuttle down near the firestorm. I'm in the middle of it.

KURGAN

Sending the shuttle, Company member Ahab. That was quite a show.

AHAB

Did you get all the cool stuff I said on tape, did you record it?

KURGAN

I did!

AHAB

Ohhh man I can't wait till they say I'm lying. That was so badass, right?

KURGAN

Very.

AHAB

Alright Solomon, let's go.

VO

AHAB lives to kick ass another day! But what about Bernie and Clyde? Find out next time on Episode 7: "The Shape Of Things That Were", OR: FREIGHT TRAIN.