

OVER BLACK - FLASHBACK

Roars of violence. Screams for help overlap with sounds of futuristic ballistics hitting sand. Amidst the chaos, one voice rings out clearer than the rest.

UNKNOWN MALE VOICE (O.S)

TAKE YOUR SISTER AND RUN!!

CUT TO:

EXT. DESERT - PRE-DAWN

A FIGURE (Filipino, late teens, overgrown hair) sits motionless on top of a sand dune, gazing into the dark horizon. His young face is prematurely aged with the subtle touches of recent grief. A soft wind kicks up sand around him. Patched onto his canvas vest, is a piece of cloth with a name stitched in neat letters:

FIREFLY.

EXT. DESERT, NEARBY - MINUTES LATER

On his knees, Firefly uses the beam of a FLASHLIGHT to help him scavenge through a small pile of DEBRIS sunk into the sand.

It's mostly nothing. The warm light of the flashlight reveals only scraps of wire and useless silver packaging. A SMALL BATTERY catches his eye for a moment, but it's crusted over with acid and he tosses it aside.

Firefly looks up to the faint space lanes floating, barely visible, thousands of meters above him. The pale lights of giant spaceships continue streaming along the star paths, undisturbed and unresponsive. He brings his gaze back down.

The debris, likely a trash drop from one of the vessels, almost never contains much, but every so often...

Firefly's eyes flash with excitement.

His fingers wrap around some SILVER PACKAGES still full. He puts them in his empty SATCHEL.

A BUZZING SOUND.

Firefly turns as a small DRONE speeds towards him and stops suddenly at his eye level.

It flashes continuously in bursts of two.

FIREFLY

Oh no.

The drone whizzes away and Firefly slings his satchel over his shoulder, sprinting close behind.

INT/EXT. FIREFLY CAMP - CONTINUOUS

Their make-shift camp is not much, but it has been improving. BRAIDED GRASSES and other SMALL TRINKETS have been carefully collected or crafted in the barebones living area.

The embers of a fire are still smoking beside the sleeping blankets - Firefly's are folded, but his sister's are rumpled beside them.

FIREFLY

Liwa?

His eyes scan the camp with growing panic.

FIREFLY (CONT'D)

(louder)

LIWA?

EXT. FIREFLY CAMP, NEARBY - CONTINUOUS

LIWA (Filipina, 11) lies on her side, cheeks wet with tears, her ROBOTIC PROSTHETIC LEG unresponsive and immobilizing her.

Firefly races to her with the drone at his side.

FIREFLY

Are you hurt?

Liwa tries to stifle a whimper.

FIREFLY (CONT'D)

(grabbing her shoulders)

Liwa, look at me! ARE YOU HURT?

She shakes her head.

LIWA

It just shocked me, that's all.

Firefly sighs in relief, resting his hand on the back of her head.

LIWA (CON'T) (CONT'D)
It just needs a little more power.

A small blue light pulses on the prosthetic, indicating the low battery level. Firefly sees the skin bleeding slightly at the interface of the metal.

FIREFLY
(pulling away with sudden
anger)
What were you thinking? I told you
this wasn't ready yet. I told you
never to leave camp with-

LIWA
I only wanted to TRY!

Firefly goes quiet.

LIWA (CON'T) (CONT'D)
I woke up in the middle of the
night and you were gone!

FIREFLY
You knew where I was.

LIWA
I can't just sit here in the open
waiting for you.

A fresh batch of tears streams its way down Liwa's cheeks.

FIREFLY
I'm sorry, I'm sorry. Here, look.

He reaches behind him and with a wave of his hands, produces the silver packages in an impromptu magic trick.

It works. She cracks a small smile and accepts, ripping off a corner and beginning to eat the nutritional paste.

A beat as she eats.

Liwa nudges Firefly in the shoulder, bringing back his attention.

LIWA
You still haven't explained why you
left. Bad dreams?

FIREFLY

No.

A lie. She knows it.

She pushes the other paste towards him, but Firefly shakes his head.

FIREFLY (CONT'D)

I had mine on the way back. These are both for you.

Another lie, but more convincing this time.

Liwa musters a half-smile and reaches to accept the second food parcel when:

BOOOOOOM!

A brilliant flash of orange ignites the world and the two have to squint to make out the silhouette of an ENORMOUS SHIP marked "LUNAR TECHNOLOGIES" falling from the sky in a plume of thick, purple smoke.

Firefly doesn't waste time and scoops Liwa into his arms and races, agile and surefooted, back into their camp and places her down.

Sounds of A TREMENDOUS IMPACT rumble the earth.

FIREFLY (CONT'D)

Don't move!

He covers her, rigid and bracing, but no shock wave comes. They catch their breath. Firefly sets her down and starts gathering their belongings.

FIREFLY (CONT'D)

We need to move camp, Liwa.

LIWA

Wait a minute. This is what we've been waiting for. It's a government ship -out here! It must be filled with Lunatech supplies! Food. Real food, Kuya!!

FIREFLY

It's too dangerous.

LIWA

It might have medical supplies! It might have...

She looks at her bionic leg. A beat.

FIREFLY

I'm supposed to keep you safe.
Right now, we're safe. Here. As
long as we stay hidden.

LIWA

Hidden isn't safe.

FIREFLY

We're not the only ones who saw
that ship go down, Liwa.

LIWA

You can't hide us forever! You hide
from me, you hide from the world!
Kuya? How long do you think we can
survive out here like this?

A beat.

LIWA (CONT'D)

How long?

No response.

Liwa looks down at her prosthetic leg. The weight of the leg
has contorted the rest of her body, rendering her vulnerable
and defenseless.

Firefly looks away and absent-mindedly chews at his finger.
He peeks outside their dome-like structure.

Finally, he sighs. He turns back to Liwa.

FIREFLY

You have your beacon?

Liwa nods, eyes flickering with more life. She looks around
and pulls out a small spotlight. Firefly takes a deep breath
and grabs his satchel.

LIWA

Take the drone. You remember the
signal, right? One light is safe,
two-

FIREFLY

Two is danger.

He puts on his goggles and walks out of camp towards the
plume of smoke rising out of the distant desert, drone
trailing behind.

EXT. ROCK OUTCROPPING - MOMENTS BEFORE

The light of the explosion illuminates the face of TARSA (moderately built, fresh-faced, mild-mannered).

A second face comes into frame, revealing KOGA (grizzled, donning a targeting visor).

Koga takes off his visor, beaming and staring at the explosion in awe. A monstrous hand grabs Koga and rips him out of frame.

YANK!

Koga smashes into the gravelly floor.

AMOMONGO (stocky, well-built with a wild, relentless look in his eye) marches up to Koga, towering over him.

Amomongo raises his BATON. Koga points to the sky, pleading.

KOGA

W-Wait! I got it! Look! I hit i-

CRACK!

The baton cuts Koga off with a swift but deadly swing to the head.

A beat.

Amomongo wipes the baton off on the thick cloth around his leg. He rips Koga's baton from his dead body and latches it to his own waist.

He turns to Tarsa. His voice snarls through the gorilla mask he wears, its fangs protruding farther and more menacingly than those on Tarsa's mask.

AMOMONGO

Disobey my order, and you'll end up like him.

Amomongo gives Koga's skull a STOMP, before marching off. Tarsa watches him go, but he forgets himself.

TARSA

(pointing to the sky)
But Koga hit the shipment.

The guerilla leader picks up loose SUPPLIES, but doesn't turn.

AMOMONGO

Too late for my liking. I said
fire, and he didn't fire.

TARSA

If he would've shot it down any
sooner, it would've gone down on
civilians.

Finally, Amomongo whips around to glare at Tarsa.

AMOMONGO

Look around you!

Amomongo turns to AMAN (built, unassuming, along for the
ride).

He has his mask on, lending him the same cold, geometric look
as the other two masks, which are also contoured by thin
wires of red light.

AMOMONGO (CONT.) (CONT'D)

Is there anything alive out here?

Aman looks away, avoiding Amomongo's searing stare. A flying
mosquito-like insect WHINE-BUZZES by Aman's face, further
goading him to react. But he does nothing.

Tarsa stands, dusting himself off.

TARSA

There's people out there. Nomads-
or refugees that know how to stay
hidden.

The insect meanders to Amomongo, who waves away at it.

AMOMONGO

Sounds like pests to me.

Amomongo marches away once more. Tarsa follows.

TARSA

You know they can be useful. As, as
guides...informants-

AMAN

Target practice.

Tarsa shoots Aman a look as he approaches Amomongo.

TARSA

I didn't sign up for this. You just
killed one of our men!

The leader stops and turns on a dime to face Tarsa. He points to Koga's motionless form.

AMOMONGO

Do you think you worms are the first team under my command? He almost cost us the weapons shipment.... And you're costing us time. When victory's on the line, you deal with whatever is in the way.

TARSA

You mean *whoever* is in the way.

AMOMONGO

Same thing.

Tarsa says nothing. Amomongo scoffs and walks away.

TARSA

We're supposed to be bringing people a fair chance. Freedom!

AMOMONGO

Power is freedom. Nobody ever said freedom was fair.

TARSA

Who do you think you are, some Lunatech asshole?

Tarsa's glare chases Amomongo down.

TARSA(CONT.) (CONT'D)

You're no better than the parasites that got us here in the first place.

Amomongo stops. Silence. He unsheathes his electric baton once more, igniting it this time. Nebulous BLUE light and a sharp HUM emanate out in all directions.

He turns and surges towards Tarsa.

Before Amomongo can get any closer, Aman launches himself forward, putting himself in Amomongo's way.

AMAN

We can't afford to lose anyone else.

Amomongo slowly shifts his steely gaze to Aman. Aman catches himself.

AMAN (CONT.) (CONT'D)
We can't afford to lose anyone
else...sir.

A BUZZING sound can be heard right around Amomongo's feet. He bats Aman's arms away, and slams his electric baton on a boulder next to him, leaving a scorch mark. The BUZZING stops.

Amomongo grunts, spits on the ground and turns to walk in the direction of the explosion.

AMOMONGO
Let's go get those weapons.

CUT TO:

EXT. DESERT RIDGE - AN HOUR LATER

The drone flies over the ridge towards Firefly crouched on the other side like a kangaroo rat. The drone lands in his hands. Immediately he begins pressing buttons on it.

FIREFLY
(under his breath)
All right, where'd you go?

On his goggles, an image of the terrain projects out, revealing aerial photos and video of the landscape. Part of the footage shows the GUERRILLA FIGHTERS behind the outcropping.

Firefly narrows his eyes curiously. On the projection, Amomongo and the guerillas walk across the desert.

The projection shuts off. Firefly moves slowly to the top of the ridge. As he presses a button to turn off the drone footage, he ever so slightly peeks over the ridge to peer into the distance.

Nothing.

Firefly turns back to the drone, looks to the side, and subconsciously chews at his finger. He glances in the direction he came from. He sighs.

With a click of a button on his remote, the drone starts BUZZING away. The BUZZ is LOUD.

FIREFLY (CONT'D)
Shit!

Firefly stops the drone for a second, looking to make sure no one is around. He presses another button and a beacon of light shoots out in the direction of his sister, before going out again. One flash.

A single flashing response comes back from the distance. Firefly sighs in relief, and brings the drone down. He gets up, looks to the pillar of smoke in the distance and heads towards it quietly.