

The Wrong Congo Burns

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“In the 21st century, a wave of environmental activism brought global warming to a temporary standstill. Yet, as empires crumbled, so too did the morals and lessons learn. By the 24th century, nations had become mere facades for corporate powers. At the forefront of this insatiable greed stood Congo Essence Enterprises—a conglomerate that helped to consume 90% of Earth's resources, leaving behind only scattered remnants of untouched nature. Now, this corporate titan and others control every aspect of life—media, housing, food, and even governance—shaping a world where profit reigns supreme.

Education has become a tool for indoctrination, teaching obedience to corporate interests. Health care no longer was a commodity, with only the wealthiest able to afford biological preservation. As most of the population turned to cybernetics to stay alive using mechanical limbs, neural implants, and synthetic organs replace their deteriorating bodies from the poison's air? The ones that remain human stepped on those who they forsaken, day by day the poor walked the line between human and machine as the it became ever so blurrier.

Above the clouds, the rich build, pristine cities, floating in the upper most atmosphere, far removed from the toxic, poisonous air that holds the world in a chokehold below. This elevated paradise is reserved only for those with wealth and power that get to escape the consequences of their exploitation. While most humanity struggles on the surface, suffocating their lives consumed by the corporate machines.

Culture and art have been reduced to hollow propaganda, the vibrant colors of the world traded for the artificial light of advertisements covering the skies. glorifying corporate power and suppressing individualism. Till even time itself is commodified, with every

waking moment turned into an opportunity to produce, consume, and conform.

Humanity's connection with itself and nature has been severed, replaced by a sterile existence dictated by corporation's bottom line. Amid the devastation, the only forests that remain are in central Africa, the small stretch of wilderness that left but even this final bastion is falling Congo Essence Enterprises continues its relentless push to harvest what remains of the forest, exploited and controlled by the same empire that ravaged the rest of the planet. The corporate juggernaut that not only claimed the resources of Earth but also its soul, leaving a fractured world where survival is only for those who can afford it.

A group of four, dressed in black tactical gear with pouches and ropes wrapped around their bodies, rush down a narrow hallway. Each of them has a knife strapped to their chest, their faces obscured by masks—except for one, whose face is replaced by a cybernetic skull. They move quickly, the sound of a helicopter's spotlight overhead growing louder as it searches for them. The building they are in, still under construction as scaffolding stretches out around them.

They dart into the shadows, weaving through concrete walls as the helicopter circles, the searchlight flicking past them. They reach the stairwell, but before they can open the door, a squad of armored guards bursts through, weapons drawn. The group takes a sharp turn, running down a long corridor. On one side, windows open to the streets below.

The leader glances back and sees the guards getting closer, their flashlight beams cutting through the darkness around a corner. He slams into a construction worker there after hours, dressed in a hazmat suit with a respirator mask, and they both crash to the ground. The leader scrambles to his feet, looking back as the guards round the corner. Flashlights blinking into view.

They keep running, as bullets start zipping past them. One of the other members pulls the worker up, urging him to follow. The voice of the woman sharpening cuts into his ears, commanding, "Come on, quick!"

More gunfire erupts as the worker follows the group, dodging the hail of bullets. They reach another corner, but their escape is blocked by more guards ahead. The leader gives a quick nod to the others. Without missing a beat, three of them leap off the building's ledge, landing on another building below.

The woman yells to the worker, "Jump!"

He freezes, terror gripping him. Quickly, she grabs him by the collar and pulls him toward the edge. "They'll shoot if they see you so. Move!"

He hesitates, then takes a breath and jumps, the woman following close behind. They land hard on the roof, just as bullets begin to rain down. They scramble for cover,

ducking behind ventilation units as the helicopter swoops in, shining a light on them.

The leader signals to the others, of a flat skylight on the roof, they all throw smoke grenades shrouding the area in thick, gray fog. and the group sprints toward the skylight. As they near it, the group leaps onto it, shattering the glass beneath them. The leader hooks a rope onto the ledge, sliding down as the others follow.

They land in a museum, quickly moving through an exhibit as motion sensors illuminate the art around them. The group leaps over the entrances to a room, but the worker runs right through an alarm. A wailing siren starts as red flashing lights begins to blink.

Ahead, a police officer blocks their exit, his gun raised, ready to shoot. The group takes cover behind the exhibits, silently shifting between displays. The leader signals them to advance.

The officer, clearly on edge, shouts, "Just come out, and I won't shoot! More officers are on the way."

The group remains silent, moving forward like shadows. The officer begins to inch toward them, almost finding the women till the worker strikes, knocking him out cold with a swift blow to the side of his head. The leader whistles, and the group runs for the door.

They jump shattering the glass as they burst through the museum's entrance. They spill into the street, ducking into an alley. The helicopter looming overhead, still searching. The group continues to run through alleyways till reaching their destination.

The leader pauses, turning to the worker. "You can leave now."

Pushing aside a dumpster, revealing an entrance to a ventilation shaft of a skyscraper. They crouch down and start walking through till they reach an elevator shaft, jumping atop the ascending elevator. The leader sees the man trailing them and grabs him by the collar, spinning him around.

"Why did you follow us?"

"Because the cops are still after us," the man replies, looking up as the elevator nears the roof.

The leader eyes him, his voice stern. "You still have a chance to leave. If you stay, you lose the option. It is your choice."

He yells, "what am I choosing to be."

yelling back, "Someone who wants to change the world"

the worker tells him, "Ok, I will"

Just then the elevator halts on the second-to-last floor. The group exits quickly, the woman smirking as she passes the worker. "The elevator doesn't go to the top floor."

They enter their base, a makeshift living space with minimal furnishings. The group stands around the worker, the leader motioning for him to sit. "Take it off."

The worker removes his gear. As his gold and black cybernetic arms emerge from his sleeves, his hood falls back, revealing buzzed white hair. A long gray trench coat drapes his frame. When he removes his mask, the group pauses—he's just a teenager. They take a step back as he introduces himself.

"Hi, I'm Ray—"

The leader cuts him off. "Don't tell us your name."

The group removes their masks, each introducing themselves. The leader, dressed in a vest covered with metal plates, a black collar with a gold pendant, and hair that fades from black to white, speaks first.

"I'm Night, leader of this group."

"The man with the cybernetic skull, is the muscle of the group, and his name is Iron"

The woman who had first grabbed the worker steps forward. "I am Servo, the tech girl. I keep all our data hidden and the base off any grids." She tosses her suit aside, revealing a black and blue firefighter jacket that matches her dark hair, which fades into blue and white.

The last member of the group grins. "I'm Bomb, the pyromaniac." Her body shifts as metal plates on her start changing color, from black to white, while her hair also shifts from black to white with pink tips.

Night looks at the worker. "You'll need a code name now to... Impulse?"

"Why do we need the names?" the worker asks.

"Because it's likely we get caught and it's, so we don't all go down when one does." Night explains.

"Well, then can I get a different one?"

"Oh, do you not like yours? Good."

Servo walks by, adding with a smirk, "Don't worry we all hated our's to."

Impulse nods. "Okay, then but it seems like all the names have some meaning so why is mine impulse."

"Because you attack that officer without thinking about it for servo, whom you didn't

even know, so it was an”

“Ok I get it, so than what do you guy do.”

“Oh yeah, We’re Eco-terrorists,” Night tells him

Impulse frowns. So then why were people shooting at us?”

Night glances at Bomb. "Because we do stuff like this."

Bomb presses a button, and as they all look out the window of the skyscraper, small explosions detonate around the building. As the smoke clears, the fire burns across the building’s face, spelling out:

"The Wrong Congo Burns."