

TRIUMVIRATE

Written by

Stephen Hall

EXT. ETHIOPIAN PLAIN - DAY

Heat haze rises from the land with the shapes of HAMIDI ABDULLAHI [34] and YÓU DÀ [27] kicking the dust as they cross the barren land.

YÓU DÀ (V.O.)
How long did you say it would take?

HAMIDI ABDULLAHI (V.O.)
I didn't.

EXT. ETHIOPIAN PLAIN - MOMENTS LATER

Hamidi, a satchel hanging over his shoulder, and Yóu Dà come into view.

YÓU DÀ
I'm so thirsty.

HAMIDI ABDULLAHI
Yóu Dà, you complain too much.

YÓU DÀ
I'm not complaining. Just stating a fact.

Hamidi opens his palm to reveal some grapes which he offers Yóu Dà who readily accepts.

YÓU DÀ (CONT'D)
How do you do that?

He eats the grapes.

HAMIDI ABDULLAHI
We're nearly there.

A small village appears through the shimmering haze.

EXT. ETHIOPIAN VILLAGE - DAY

Split by a single, dusty dry street, flat, mud-bricked houses line their way towards a distant, parched crop field.

YÓU DÀ
So this was where you were born?

HAMIDI ABDULLAHI
And where my father died.

YÓU DÀ
A place of sadness and joy?

Hamidi is silent.

YÓU DÀ (CONT'D)
Where it all began.

HAMIDI ABDULLAHI
It was a fight he was doomed to
lose.

YÓU DÀ
Sometimes prayers are not enough.

HAMIDI ABDULLAHI
Not when dealing with Cerberus.

Yóu Dà silently forms the cross with his hand.

EXT. ETHIOPIAN VILLAGE - MOMENTS LATER

The two men approach the edge of the village where a young
girl, METI GEBRE [10], waits by a well.

YÓU DÀ
At last.

Yóu Dà raises a bucket from the well and gulps desperately
from a ladle.

METI GEBRE
You came?

HAMIDI ABDULLAHI
Did you doubt me?

She shakes her head.

Hamidi shields his eyes from the searing sun and peers
ahead.

HAMIDI ABDULLAHI (CONT'D)
That way?

Meti smiles, displaying gleaming teeth, and nods.

Hamidi continues unhesitatingly into the village.

YÓU DÀ
I'll just rest for a moment, if
that's alright.

Meti Gebre runs ahead.

EXT. ETHIOPIAN VILLAGE - DAY

DESTA HAILE [12] stands holding a pamphlet which he reads with other children in the cool shadows as Meti Gebre runs past.

METI GEBRE

He is here!

EXT. ETHIOPIAN VILLAGE - MOMENTS LATER

The young boys and Meti Gebre watch him pass, his eyes fixed ahead. Desta Haile studies the pamphlet then watches Hamidi continue out of the village.

DESTA HAILE

(whisper)

It is he.

EXT. ETHIOPIA/OPEN GRASSLAND - MOMENTS LATER

Hamidi strides through open land that gives way to patches of grass, with the baking village behind him in the distance.

He stops in his tracks and scans the withering crops.

HAMIDI ABDULLAHI

I am here.

He pauses, as if listening.

HAMIDI ABDULLAHI (CONT'D)

Oil?

He waits.

His eyes glance up at the sky.

Distant birds circle beneath the blue sky.

HAMIDI ABDULLAHI (CONT'D)

A woman?

Silence.

HAMIDI ABDULLAHI (CONT'D)

I understand.

Hamidi continues on his way.

EXT. PACIFIC OCEAN - SAME TIME

The Iblis-X research vessel, THE NAVIGATOR, sits motionless in the waters off Sanguma Motu, bobbing gently.

INT. THE NAVIGATOR/THE BRIDGE - CONTINUOUS

Monitors flicker with seismic scans - layers of earth rendered in colour and density.

LOIS DUBOIS [44] studies the screen.

SOFIA RUSSO [32] scrolls through incoming data, her eyes narrowing.

SOFIA RUSSO
(quietly)
That can't be right.

LOIS DUBOIS
What is it?

He approaches the monitor to see.

A vast underground formation - massive. Dense.

SOFIA RUSSO
It's not a pocket.

She swallows.

SOFIA RUSSO (CONT'D)
It's a reservoir.

A long silence.

LOIS DUBOIS
The data is accurate?

SOFIA RUSSO
Completely. It's huge.

Lois slowly reaches for his satellite phone.

LOIS DUBOIS
Tensh needs to know.

INT. AUDITORIUM - AFTERNOON

GERRAT TENS [52] waits at the side of the stage in the packed auditorium as ELIZABETH STRAND [42], miked up, stands centre stage.

The IBLIS-X logo dominates the stage backdrop.

ELIZABETH STRAND
Ladies and gentlemen, please
welcome global award winner for
innovation and achievement. Owner
of top Fortune 500 company Iblis-X.
Gerrat Tensh!

Thunderous applause.

Tensh, wearing a head mike, steps into the spotlight –
composed, confident.

He absorbs the room before speaking.

GERRAT TENSH
Thank you, Elizabeth.

He waits for the applause to abate.

GERRAT TENSH (CONT'D)
We live in an age where possibility
is no longer theoretical.

Screens behind him flash images of wind farms, solar arrays,
satellites, cargo fleets.

GERRAT TENSH (CONT'D)
Technologies once confined to
imagination now shape our daily
lives. They power our cities. They
protect our borders. They define
our future.

He gestures subtly.

The screen transitions.

A satellite view of the Pacific.

It zooms in – THE NAVIGATOR anchored off Sanguma Motu.

GERRAT TENSH (CONT'D)
And today, Iblis-X takes another
step forward.

The image transitions to seismic scans.

GERRAT TENSH (CONT'D)
This morning, our research vessel –
The Navigator – confirmed the
discovery of a new offshore oil
reservoir close to the Pacific
island of Sanguma Motu.

The audience listens.

GERRAT TENSH (CONT'D)
Twice the size of Venezuela's.

The audience gasps.

GERRAT TENSH (CONT'D)
Resources of that scale reshape
markets. They shift the balance of
power.

The applause builds.

He steps forward.

GERRAT TENSH (CONT'D)
They change the world.

The applause builds.

GERRAT TENSH (CONT'D)
Affordable global energy is not a
distant promise.

He smiles.

GERRAT TENSH (CONT'D)
It is here.

The audience rises in fervent applause.

INT. SANGUMA MOTU/PRIME MINISTER PENINA TAITO'S OFFICE - DAY

Summer light bursts past tropical plants and through the
French doors.

Sanguma Motu's Prime Minister PENINA TAITO [52] gazes out to
the blue horizon.

PENINA TAITO
I find this discovery...

She turns to face MAKANI LUTU [42], one of her Interior
Ministers.

PENINA TAITO (CONT'D)
Worrying.

MAKANI LUTU
It lies within our territorial
waters, Prime Minister. They cannot
simply take it.

PENINA TAITO
No, but men with money and hungry
governments will not stop.

MAKANI LUTU
We have legal rights on our side.

PENINA TAITO
Legal rights are only as strong as
the people prepared to defend them.

Beat.

PENINA TAITO (CONT'D)
Our island is not a prize for
powerful nations to fight over.

EXT. ETHIOPIA/CROP FIELD - CONTINUOUS

Hamidi approaches a field of stunted crops. He extracts the
head of the plant which he rubs and smells.

He steps back, releasing the remnants which blow away in the
soft breeze.

Hamidi stretches out his arms and gazes up expectantly.

The villagers stare up to the sky.

Clouds begin to gather.

A rumble of thunder breaks the ominous silence.

HAMIDI ABDULLAHI
(whisper)
Praise be with you.

Meti Gebre approaches Hamidi. Spatters of rain begin to fall
on his face and run down his cheeks like tears.

Hamidi pivots to see Yóu Dà shuffling towards him,
breathless.

Yóu Dà stops by his side, gaping as the rain increases in
intensity on the crops that slowly straighten to attention.

YÓU DÀ
Did you -

Hamidi gestures for silence.

YÓU DÀ (CONT'D)
Hamidi?

Hamidi gazes towards the crops.

Yóu Dà studies him in perplexed silence.

HAMIDI ABDULLAHI
The stranger walks among us.

His eyes dart to Yóu Dà.

HAMIDI ABDULLAHI (CONT'D)
He comes to sow chaos.

INT. CHINA/FU ZHÀO APARTMENT/LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Low light casts shadows across the stark black-and-white bachelor pad.

CHEN XINGSHI [25] sits in the company of XIAOBO LIN [23] and FU ZHÀO [26] listening to music while drinking, smoking and taking cocaine.

Fu leans back into the leather sofa and exhales.

FU ZHÀO
I told you this shit was good.

Chen snorts one of the lines of coke from the coffee table.

CHEN XINGSHI
All we need is some girls.

Xiaobo laughs.

XIAOBO LIN
Yeah.

FU ZHÀO
You should have said.

Fu gets out his cell phone.

FU ZHÀO (CONT'D)
I could call around.

CHEN XINGSHI
I've seen your girls. My mother's younger.

They all chuckle.

Xiaobo lays out more cocaine.

CHEN XINGSHI (CONT'D)
You need to get more of this shit.

FU ZHÀO
It doesn't grow on trees, you know.

XIAOBO LIN
Almost.

FU ZHÀO
You know what I mean?

Xiaobo grunts sardonically.

CHEN XINGSHI
Don't be so tight, man.

FU ZHÀO
You going to pay for it?

CHEN XINGSHI
You know I'm good to pay.

FU ZHÀO
Your credit is already high. Not
that I don't trust you.

CHEN XINGSHI
You shitting me?

XIAOBO LIN
Fu, you're talking to the General
Secretary's son.

FU ZHÀO
Hey, we all have to make a living.

Chen snorts another line and falls back into his chair.

XIAOBO LIN
Show some respect.

FU ZHÀO
We're all equal round here.

Chen opens his eyes.

Silence.

He raises an eyebrow.

No one acknowledges it.

XIAOBO LIN
Yeah, well some more than others.

FU ZHÀO
Ah, bullshit.

Xiaobo leans forwards to take a line.

XIAOBO LIN
You're not some goddamn Triad, Fu.

Fu places his hand over the line of cocaine to stop Xiaobo who glances up indignantly.

FU ZHÀO
Says who?

XIAOBO LIN
You're no more than a street
hustler. Get real.

FU ZHÀO
You saying I'm not connected?

CHEN XINGSHI
Ease up, Fu.

FU ZHÀO
No. Fuck that.

He stares at Xiaobo.

FU ZHÀO (CONT'D)
You think this is all free?

XIAOBO LIN
When have we not paid?

FU ZHÀO
Yeah, except I have to wait weeks
like some lowlife.

XIAOBO LIN
Nearly.

Xiaobo Lin reaches into his pocket and throws some notes across the table.

XIAOBO LIN (CONT'D)
Here. Take your goddamn money.

Fu Zhào rises to his feet.

FU ZHÀO
Fuck you.

Xiaobo abruptly rises.