<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Explicit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Archive Warning:</td>
<td>Graphic Depictions Of Violence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category:</td>
<td>F/M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fandom:</td>
<td>Fallout (Video Games), Fallout: New Vegas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship:</td>
<td>Female Courier/Vulpes Inculta</td>
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<tr>
<td>Character:</td>
<td>Vulpes Inculta, Female Courier, Misc Legion, The Gundersons, Original Male Character(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Additional Tags:</td>
<td>Violence, Dirty Talk, Consensual, Slow-ish burn, Self-Indulgent, Friends to Lovers, Flirting, Masturbation, More tags to be added Bodice-Ripper, Cass smuggles smutty books, Sharing a Bed, Friendship, Hurt/Comfort, Alternate Universe - Canon Divergence, Surgery, Kissing, Frottage, Vaginal Fingering, Arranged Marriage, Angst, Wedding, Vaginal Sex, Wedding Night, Smut, Unsafe Sex, Creampie, Consent is Sexy, touch starved, Six likes to cuddle, Threats of Violence, Miscarriage, pregnancy loss, Non-Explicit, Legion and NCR Justice, Humiliation, Lanius is a bastard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Series:</td>
<td>Part 1 of A Fox's Den</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stats:</td>
<td>Published: 2017-05-14 Updated: 2019-06-08 Chapters: 39/? Words: 115859</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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### Home is where the Fox is.

by [Liala](http://archiveofourown.org/users/Liala)

**Summary**

Courier Six knows he is bad news, a man capable of evil deeds, even if it is for his idea of the greater good. Yet there was something about the Frumentarius that drew her to him and created an affection she buried deep.

After a chance meeting in the Ultra-Luxe the Courier finds herself spending more time with Vulpes Inculta travelling the desert before meeting Caesar. The two face challenges and form a relationship that could change the world.

(A Courier fic I've had in my head in a while, to be clear this is a consensual relationship with Vulpes, not a non-con fic.)
Strangers in a room.

The ultra-luxe was already busy with the evening dinner the rich and elite of the strip donning their tuxedos and finery for the chance of a meal at the restaurant. Few ever saw more than scraps but here they were stuffing their faces with food and alcohol. *Profligates.*

He sat at one of the side booths, his target sat at the bar with his shotgun wielding hooligans. The rest of the patrons were busy with their own drinks and whoring that they paid him no attention. The waitress was overly flirtatious flashing him skin as she took his order, her attempt to seduce him holding little water. The tool of his trade was his features enrapturing women into spilling the secrets of their lovers or jobs. Men too would try and win his attention but he was careful to keep them at bay. He still held some self respect.

Vulpes scanned the bar once more, a flash of glittering red cut through the mediocre tones of suits. His gaze fixated on the daring colour in these trying times, red meant legion to many. Certainly to him. The red belonged to a floor length dress covered in red sequins that was cut low to the hollow of the wearers back. It was daring, the woman wore no bra, the open expanse of her skin was marred only by the scars of someone who had seen battle. The woman had an hourglass figure, still slender but strong based on the muscles hidden beneath the thin fabric. It hung to her like a second skin. Her chocolate coloured hair cascaded over her shoulder in styled waves. It shimmered in the light, he could imagine how soft it would feel. Would she moan if he kissed down her spine?

When she turned he realised the truth in the fickle nature of the gods. Courier Six, the unfortunate mailman who came back from the dead scanned the room, her lips reddened and eyes lined. It was a simple touch, not caked on like the others but it enhanced her beauty. She caught his gaze giving him a warm smile for his lechery. She crooked a finger towards him encouraging him closer. He smirked taking a long sip of his drink. She quirked her eyebrow in mock challenge but he remained seated.

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*What an infuriating man.* She sighed turning back to the bar once more. She had spotted someone staring at her from the mirror behind the bar. When she recognised the intense stare and sharp features she felt flattered he spared the time. Checking herself in the mirror she ordered another bottle of purified water (in a glass bottle because they were classy.) And stepped towards Mr. Fox.

He watched her intently, his bright blue eyes impassive in their regard for her. She was good at bluffing and talking her way out of a situation, but he was the master. It was times like this she wished she was as elegant or comfortable in a dress as Veronica. Her seductress image shattered by her inability to walk in high heeled shoes.
Only Boone had seen her in her dress and thought it strange she would even bother, that 'she didn't seem to like pretty things’. Wasn't that just a kick in the teeth. She'd explained why and he'd just looked confused which had put the final nail in the coffin.

“May I join you Mr. Fox?” She smiled. “The company was rather lacking tonight until you joined us.” Vulpes still regarded her with hidden head, a smile and a gesture to an empty seat when he remembered they were in public. “Water?” She offered pouring herself a glass, he shook his head.

“Good evening Courier,” his voice like silk against skin. “A change of image this evening.” A statement, not a question. “I approve, the colour especially.”

Six blushed, “Thank you, sometimes I like to feel like I'm alive, not just a revenge fuelled ghost,” she slipped her water carefully.

“Water? Not alcohol, strange isn't it?” He asked. “The only person in a bar not drinking alcohol.”

“The first time yes,” she replied tracing the rim of her glass with a finger. “But now they are used to it. All the alcohol I buy goes into medical supplies or as a Molotov.”

“I see.”

“How fare’s your boss? Still trying to expand his business?”

“Yes, but the competitor is proving… resilient. Though the impact of our trades is felt much further. They are afraid, we are not.”

“Yes, you certainly were more efficient and effective in your marketing message Mr.Fox. The whole desert is talking about it. I had the pleasure of visiting Camp Searchlight a few weeks ago.” Vulpes grinned, fondly remembering his victory. “Three men, all that achieved with such little personal loss. It was…”

“Terrifying? Glorious?” He offered.
“Impressive. Intelligent. Powerful.” She replied, heat rising to her cheeks. Sure, Six had thought about the desert fox, his voice had haunted the majority of her passionate dreams. He was still Legion, a fact which always snatched the high her fingers sought, but here she was flirting with the NCR’s most wanted.

“The boss has been wondering when you were going to accept his invitation.”

She looked away, unable to hold his gaze. “It's difficult, you present as reasonable, but things I have heard and seen make me wary that I would never come out again.”

“His word is truth. You would be safe.”

“It's still… dangerous. It took me couple of weeks to convince my companions I didn't need to be babysat anymore. Then, well, I got distracted by other parties and … I was afraid I'd be losing part of myself.”

“Your honesty is appreciated.” Six drained her glass afraid she would mutter something else important. “It would not be in our interest to lie to you Courier, Caesars word is law and none would dare break it.”

“What brings you to this neck of the woods today?” She queried trying to divert his attention away from herself.

“I have business with Heck Gunderson. My associates get hungry like everyone else. But his bodyguards are stopping anyone approaching.”

“I can help you meet him.” She replied automatically, goddammit Six get your shit together this isn't just anyone.

“ How?” He asked through a smile, to anyone else it would be cordial banter, but Six knew something darker was underneath.

“Well,” she began nervously. “The bodyguards are there because Heck’s son Ted has gone missing from the hotel.” He gestured for her to continue. “I agreed to find him, that’s partly why I'm here in the dress, there's a damn dress code...if you help me find him and get him back unharmed, then I'll let you return him and claim the reward from Heck. You could make your
offer then or more favourable for your … friends … and he'd likely agree.”

Vulpes sat back sipping his whisky nonchalantly, as she poured herself another drink. It was a reasonable offer, and she didn't really have a need for anymore caps what with free board at the 38.

“Don't you want the reward?”

“Got enough caps and two safehouses. Don't need it, just doing it for reputation and that the number of missing persons from this hotel is too high to be a coincidence.”

“You would honour this? Why help us if you fear us.”

“People need to eat Mr. Fox whatever colour they wear. No one should starve.” She smiled weakly. “As for honour I have stood by my word, and anyway I thought I'd help seen as at least 3 other people have disappeared without a trace. It’d be a travesty if we lost you and I want answers.”

Vulpes laughed, Six’s stomach fluttering at the sound, if only she could hear more. “Then I agree. When do we begin?”

“There’s a big soiree after closing tonight. Marjorie said to speak to Mortimer. Apparently they don't do the cannibal thing anymore, but the idea of a late night banquet gives me the heebie jeebies.”

Vulpes stood and held out his hand. “Shall we my dear?”

The Courier smiled. Oh what a night to feel alive.

“Are you carrying at all? Comfortable with Melee?” He whispered as she brushed against his chest through the open door. Flirtatious to the untrained eye.

“Not great at hand to hand but I've got a knife hidden away.” He smiled leaning in to sniff her hair. Sweet and soft he noted taking her arm to the desk. Her pulse had definitely increased, he had suspected her attraction but proof was always pleasing. “Let me talk?” She asked.
Her talk, was more mockery, a false drunken giggle about being cannibals and the concierge had sealed his lips. With some cajoling she convinced him to give him the keys to a missing girls suite. He had noticed the man fiddling under the desk while trying to seem unfazed. Perhaps he was pressing a hidden button?

“Pass me your knife,” he ordered as they entered the lift. I think we will have company.”

“Yes Vulpes.” She replied, her response pleasing on the ears. He admired the curve of her thigh as she retrieved the blade and the unmarred stretch of skin, so easy to mark with his mouth. “Here you go. Careful it's coated in cazador poison.”

He nodded and pocket the blade in the breast pocket of his jacket. Stepping into the hallway the faint buzz of electrical lamps and faint jazz filled the hallway. The Courier led as he watched their rears, there were no voices from the other rooms, he doubted they were soundproof. The door to the room swung open, blood still staining the carpet and a body stripped to their underwear. He immediately drew the knife.

The Courier flicked through his things and a coat by the door. The curve of her body as she bent over was a distraction from the task. But one he would return to later.

“Got it!” She called, looking at a card “Oh shit. Not good. This is the PI I was going to meet earlier about the case. He never showed.”

“We should go.” He stated, holding out a hand to encourage her compliance.

“Not quite so fast.” The low pitched accent of the three masked men suggested family not guests. The courier stayed put, useful so he could swing without fear of hitting her. “Seems like your sticking your nose where it doesn't belong. Daryl deal with the girl, we’ll deal with this fella.”

The men lunged, Vulpes world narrowing to violence and victory. As the first man swung he had already parried, driving the dagger into the man's guts. His mind faintly acknowledged the shriek of the Courier as he pushed the weight of the already dead man off the other brought his came down across his back. Grunting Vulpes scrabbled forward, gaining distance and sure footing. His opponent held his cane in both hands, a barrier and a bash weapon. A frontal assault would be fruitless.
Switching the blade into his other hand, he charged testing the thugs reflexes switching grip and
attack as the other defended. A loud crash nearby distracted his opponent, seeing an opportunity
he grabbed the cane with both hands and dropped to his back heaving and using his legs to throw
the man to his back. While dazed Vulpes slammed the blade into his victims neck watching
emotionless as the man drowned in his blood.

The Courier.

He swivelled realising he couldn't hear her voice or scuffling. The other guard was red in the face
and bloated as he clawed at his throat, a tight cord of fabric pulled tight as the man’s larger frame
hid the courier. Running to her side he saw her feet braced against his back pulling with her face
contorted with rage and determination.

He saw no need to intervene.

A few seconds later she dropped the ropes, the man falling lifeless from the bed as she huffed. Her
hair was a mess and she had a cut lip but was in mostly one piece. He helped her onto her feet.

“Thanks, you all right?” She asked tucking her loose strands behind her ear. He enjoyed her
flushed vibrant skin. “Look here, the investigator had a matchbook with a note in. A name and
time.”

“I suggest that we move on and look closer in the bar.”

The stepped back into the hallway, still deathly quiet and vacant. They made their way back to the
main floor giving Mortimer a forced smile as the man froze stiff. Back in the booth the Courier
ordered a bottle of water and he poured over the matchbook. There was no clue to the person's
identity or occupation. It would be be a great risk to go in underprepared.

“It is a big risk to go to this meeting.”

“But what choice do we have?” She sighed wearily. “I can go by myself if you wish?”

“That would be even more foolish. Especially since you are now unarmed.”. He took the bottle
and poured himself a glass. We will go together, the meeting is in two hours till then, I guess we
wait.”
The courier stepped out of the booth and across to the bar, he noticed the difficulty she had moving on one side and noted it for later. When she returned she held a wooden box under one arm. “Care for a game of chess? I beat all my companions and I think you will be a challenge.” She smiled wincing when the cut or her lip stretched.

“I don't think so, you could be no match for me.”

“Afraid I might win?” She taunted teasingly, the anger in him rising.

“Trying to get me to lose my cool?” He retorted.

“Is it working?” Her perfectly shaped eyebrow arched, her index tracing the tip of the king as he stared her down. The suggestion sending the blood rushing to his cock. Such delicate hands she had...how would they feel on his cock?

“One match.” He growled low. “What do you offer as reward?”

“A dance, should I win.” She smiled. “Do Legionnaire's even dance?”

“You will have to win to see.” He chuckled placing the black well-worn pieces on the board. “Let's see...” he watched the Courier intently. “Travel with me and learn about the legion. Should you still find us repulsive I will leave you at a safe destination.”

“Deal.” She smirked.
Thank you so much for your comments, it really boosted my confidence with this fic. I couldn't wait to post the next part and I'm polishing the next.

Wishing you all the best!

“A good move courier, but not good enough.” He teased, taking another pawn. It was rather simple to fluster her into mistakes. “One might think you're not actually trying.”

“Such a fucking tease.” She sniped poring over the board. He noted the small frown and intense gaze as she focused, like the board was the focus of her world. “Were you always a frumentarius?” She asked, taking another piece. He was surprised by the question, was she trying to get to know him? He supposed profligates liked a good sob story, but his story was one of glory.

“No, I began as a legionary in my contubernium. A unit of 8 men” he began to clarify. “I worked hard and was blessed by Mars when Caesar saw greatness in me. I rose rapidly through the ranks, despite the protests of his advisors. Yet again and again I proved myself true.”

“I bet that did not sit well for the others, pity for them.” She chuckled, he found her sincerity strange. “I don't know I could be so focused on one thing. Maybe that was what led me to become a courier?”

“You mean you don't know?”

“That's what a small caliber bullet can do to your brain.” Her smile pained, “I don't really remember anything before waking up in the docs office in Goodsprings. So I suppose I could have been anything before. Perhaps I was serious and focused or perhaps I was a floozy. All I know is that I woke up and this is who I became.”

“I didn't know.”

“No, I suppose when we first met in Nipton, it had only been a few days since I had left Goodsprings. It certainly made a strong impression.” Vulpes smiled remembering his great
message. “It was such a wicked place.” She added eyes meeting his own at the reference.

“That it was indeed, it made for a good lesson. Did you know most couriers are spies?” He replied, “Both for the NCR and us. You never know, you could have been with us all along.”

“I doubt you would have treated me as a stranger if that were so or your friends allow a female to have such freedom. I’d probably be just another slave used for… entertainment.” the word hung heavy in the air between them. He was aware of his colleagues distasteful tendencies and that it would be a hurdle they would cross to woo her support.

“With your looks, unlikely. An officer’s wife perhaps.”

“You have wives?” She exclaimed and he frowned at her outburst. “Like what we think of wives or…”

“Still slaves, just more respected and … cherished.” He purred, watching the blush climb up her cheeks. “If you were one of us, you would most certainly be someone’s wife.”

“Do you have a wife?” the boldness of her question surprised him, the shock in her eyes matching his own. Why was that a factor? He let her stew for a moment sipping his water thoughtfully. “I … sorry. Is it not a done thing to talk about?”

“I have yet to take a wife, Courier. There has been little time for … enjoying… another’s company. To be in the position I am requires dedication.”

“Oh, good. I mean. Shit I don’t mean it that way.” She cursed.

“Checkmate, Courier.” She opened her mouth to retort, he held her captured king to highlight his meaning. “Shall we attend the meeting?”. He slid from the bench offering his elbow once more. She huffed, cheeks stained from her slip up.

As they moved back towards the hotel foyer he noticed she leaned a little heavier on his arm. Not enough to be uncomfortable but noticeable. Should he offer to stop? She was not objecting to the pain her leg must be causing her. Moriarty watched with false calm, Vulpes could see the tension in his eyes and body as they stepped towards the lift. He would have to be eliminated soon enough. She stumbled just before the button once more, something needed to be done.
“Wait here please couri-”

“Would you stop calling me that?” She snapped, “Friends call me Six. As in Courier Six.”

“Wait here my dear Six.” He soothed, kissing her on the forehead, her small squeak satisfying. He stepped away back to Mortimer, the concierge seemingly close to fraying at the edges. “Do you have a cane we could borrow? My companion twisted her ankle.” A perfectly civil request the man was forced to comply. When Vulpes returned, he handed her the cane. The metal handle was curved and strong with intricate patterns worthy of the club’s grandeur. “Use it,” he ordered. Taking her arm once more leading her into the lift. “If all else fails use it as a weapon,” he instructed, “we don’t know who’ll we’ll meet.”

Back in the day the Ultra-Luxe must have been the height of society, the pool room was grand and opulent. Steam rose from the heated water, something many would kill for in the wasteland. A brass signpost indicated the way to steam room, whatever that was for. They carefully skirted around the slippery floor scanning for any further complications. Vulpes opened the door revealing a man in a tuxedo hiding between the towels, they stepped inside the steam room approaching the man who was clearly nervous.

“You the guy from the matchbook?” Began the Six, he almost rolled his eyes at her obvious question. “Don’t give me that look!”

“My name is Chauncey. Where’s the PI?”

“Dead I’m afraid, the same goons that got him came after us.”

“Crap, I knew he would find out.” He continued with Six’s encouragement. “Mortimer, he wants to return the society back to cannibalism. He’s got that tycoon’s kid locked up in a fridge waiting to be made into a meal. He’s crazy!”

“Shit, I knew that there was going to be some weeding, but cannibalism.”

“Even we frown upon it.”
“No shit?” she replied surprised.

“We have standards.” He smirked, the soft pop of a silence bullet drawing his attention to the door. Instinctively he reached for the blade, the bullet missing him entirely. Charging forward he tried to gut the man but he was too quick. The Courier moved holding her cane like a sword swinging wildly and unco-ordinated, it was clearly not her strength. Using the Courier as a distraction he harried the attacker giving him no quarter, the man would tire and then he would die. The Courier jabbed her cane shoving the man against the wall, the handle of the cane pressed against his windpipe. Vulpes pinned the man’s arms, only the enemies legs could move. Slowly the courier crushed the man's throat with her cane. Satisfied he was neutralised she let the unconscious man collapse onto the floor, followed cutting the man’s throat to be sure. He swiftly began to check the man's pockets, only finding a vague contract with little detail all they had to go upon.

“There’s no useful information.”

“Well we weren't expecting much, it's just a shame Chauncey paid the price.”

“What do you mean?” He turned paying attention to the room eyes resting on the corpse of the society member, a neat bullet hole in his forehead. “Well, shit.”

“Can we go?” She muttered resting her weight on the cane. The assassin had caught her badly on her injured side her face paler. He wrapped an arm around her waist, to most it would seem they were a doting couple but it allowed him the ability to support her. “Thanks,” she mumbled.

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In a daze the Courier and Vulpes left the baths considerably more disheveled than when they arrived. The tuxedo she had been admiring was dishevelled and torn no doubt her makeup had smudged. So much for feeling like a siren she mused. They couldn’t continue on in this state, she doubted the bar would allow them entry looking like the common ilk. Shame, it was a wonderful evening If only there was not a potential cannibal cult rising to power. “I say we find a way to the kitchens and free Ted. Kill any who might stop us and work for Moriarty.”

“How could we tell? It would be foolhardy and a risk not worth taking.”

“I dunno,” she shrugged. “Kill em all and let their god sort them out?”
Vulpes sighed, she could almost hear his eyes rolling. “Do you think you can keep a charade?”

“Yes, yes I can.” she replied.

“We pretend to be society members, get down to the kitchens judge our options from there. Only if we have to, do we attack.”

“Sounds like a plan. But where will we get two outfits?”

“It is rather a speciality of mine, get to the room where the detective was. I'll join you shortly.”

She gave him a thumbs up and started a shuffle back towards their borrowed living quarters. But noted Vulpes had already picked a target watching a giggling couple in members clothing. Well she supposed, at least the new dress would be cute.

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Sequestered away back in the room, Courier Six winced as she looked herself over in the mirror, her face was cut and the lip was starting to swell; her fashionable image ruined. With a heavy sigh she ran water into the bowl helping herself to the toiletries and began to gently clean herself.

Yep… that was going to be one hell of a shiner. The towel quickly reddened, wincing, she sat on the side of the bath yanking her dress up, the gash on her thigh was still bleeding, but it wasn't deep ideally it could use stitches but it wasn't vital. Using a clean towel and some tape from under the sink she attached the towel like a makeshift plaster her fingers unable to keep the pressure. The one night she didn't have more than one stimpack and with the rate people were trying to kill them she may need it for something more severe, like another bullet hole.

Popping two mild painkillers, she slid to sit on the floor. Cold tiles were more preferable to sharing a room with corpses. Her head began to droop as she fought a losing battle against sleep. Her mind drifting to one last thought.

What a fucking day…
Cold floors and appetisers

Chapter Notes
See the end of the chapter for notes

“Courier…Six...” Six stirred as a strong hands shook her. “Wake up… By Mars woman! Pull yourself together!”

“Why so noisy?” She mumbled dozily, pawing fruitlessly at the air. Her human alarm clock keeping her upright. “Lemme sleep.”

“Sadly not, I fear that would be fatal. Let me see your leg.” Vulpes ordered, she felt the fabric of her dress shift against her skin. His touch gentler than what she imagined.

“Perrrrrvert.” She giggled. “Bet you couldn't wait to lift my skirt.”

“Stop acting like a child! Where are the stimpacks you had?”

“Handbag” she replied. “Jesus anyone else cold?”

“Stubborn woman, why didn't you tell me?”. She could feel his touch recoil at the edge of the wound.

“Had good leads. Enjoyed the chess.” She squinted at Vulpes blurred form knelt beside her, his blue eyes the easiest thing to fixate on. Six whined as he pulled back the tape, biting her lip to stifle a scream her hold on his arm was an anchor as her body felt light.

“How do I use this?”

“Press the needle into the wound, then press the plunger. Pretty simple.”

Vulpes followed instructions pausing only when Six cried out at the pain the pressure caused. She was grateful for the respite, her death grip on his jacket had turned her knuckles white. When the pressure eased from the injection she slumped back against the bath. “It might heal all, she
explained, “but it hurts like hell. Personally I don't like using Med-x.”

“A wise choice, I have seen many lose their life in search of their next dose.”

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Vulpes washed his hands in the sink as Courier Six continued to mumble at him. Stubborn woman, hiding the wound from him, if he had been any later…then he would have failed Caesars order to get her to the fort unharmed. Failure was not something that he allowed, this was too close for comfort “Why didn't you use it earlier?” he asked, offering a glass of water.

“I didn't think I'd lost that much blood,” she drank deep. “I only had one, I wanted to save it for a bullet wound.”

“Will it take long to heal?”

“Look for yourself.” And he did. The drug already having knitted the flesh together. It was a miracle, one whose purpose could not have been intentionally evil. How many could be saved if they used it? “It'll look rough for a few days then just another thin scar.”

“Old world medicine was miraculous but not without its flaws.”

“Actually I make my own, using old syringes I sterilise, they’re almost as effective.” He watched as she got back onto unsteady feet. “Did you get the disguises?”

“Easily, although you may wish to shower first.” He indicated to her general bloodied state.

“Goddammit! I really loved that dress. Do we have time?”

“Yes, let me get your clothes so you can change in private.”

As soon as he heard the lock click behind he quickly changed. They may work together, but he did not trust her. The tuxedo was loose, but not unusually so. But it was still better than the gambler
suit, which was unbearably itchy. He hid the blade once more in an inner pocket and checked his appearance in the mirror. If he could get one of the seamstresses to take it in but it would be a good addition to the Frumentarii’s disguises and access to better sources. So if he had it taken in some other brute would probably complain.

A short while later Six stepped from the shower room her skin back to a healthy tone, well he supposed it was healthier than near death. She was towelling her hair dry, it’s long length curling below her shoulders. She was different, softer without the makeup and decadence. Her skin was smooth and sun-kissed, her cheeks naturally rosy and her lips were still...enticing. She leant forward letting her hair drape over shoulder fingers combing through to get the rough knots before neatly plaiting it.

“Right, shall we?” For a woman who had bled on the grouting she was certainly eager.

“Here a mask, otherwise the outfit is not complete.”

Silently they both attached their masks and stepped into the hallway once more. He noted she was walking easier but still held onto her cane as if it was a lifeline. At least it had the potential to be a weapon. They entered the main restaurant, and took a seat at the bar noting the direction of kitchen staff. Clad in the Ultra luxe clothes, no one paid any attention when they went through the door.

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The scent of burning flesh assaulted Six’s nostrils as they entered the white tiled room. Two great brahmin carcasses were being toasted by flamethrower wielding tuxedoed men. Neither paid them attention as they stepped past and went down further into the kitchens. At the end of the corridor she spotted a guard on a route and Vulpes pulled them into a sideroom, as strong as they were they couldn't take on a machine gun unarmed. The wine cellar.

He pushed her further into the room hiding in the doorway, his body tense and poised for violence, like a taught spring.

Still the footsteps drew closer, Six gripped the cane so that she could use it like a bat. The metal handle would give any impact a wicked slice. Vulpes indicated to be silent, as the guard walked past he struck, his unwitting Victim locked in the tight grasp of Vulpes arms slowly crushing his windpipe. With scavenged rags they bound and gagged the man securing their exit.

“We don't have time to search!” Hissed Vulpes as she dug through the man's pockets. “Follow.” He ordered, leaving through the door and expecting her to follow. She merely shrugged and continued.
“Never leave goods behind” she chuckled rifling through the man's pockets and swapping her cane for a scavenged 9mm. Continuing on, pockets already heavier, she saw Vulpes next to another victim, his neck snapped. Perhaps that one out up a fight? Once more she scavenged for goods. This one at least had sense to carry a stimpack, for what good it did for hapless chap. She continued her business as she approached the slice of light from the door of a well lit room, Vulpes was hunched down at the door.

“What’s occuring?” She asked softly in his ear. He pointed through the open door to the cook having a rather irate tirade. She urged him aside and stepped into kitchen, cane held horizontally she went slow and steady, intending to strangle him. When she was close enough she threw the cane over his head and pulled pulling the wood against his neck. Wrapping her legs around his body she clamped down like a vice, unmovable as he tried to shake free and lash out at her. Bracing her knee in the centre of his back she pulled tighter, till his body relaxed.

“It's done,” she called and her Fox entered the room. “Who the fuck has a terminal lock on their fridge!” she cursed. “I’ll see if there is a backup key”

“No need.” He stated, fingers dancing over the keyboard. “We’re in.”

“Huh, well what do you know? Go on, you go in, let him see you as the saviour, it'll cement your chances with his dad.”

“Thank you.”

The Courier finished scouring the place for any valuable loot that would reasonably fit in a handbag. The cheers and whoops of Ted Gunderson and Vulpes hushed instructions made her smile. Clearly the boy was as insufferable as his father. She peered around the corner and could see the tense smile on Vulpes’ face as he repeated instructions again. The skulls in the fridge cemented ultra-luxe's guilt.

Returning to the door she noted the men they had incapacitated remained detained, the corridor still clear and unclogged.

“Well howdy there ma’am, ain’t you a pretty little lady.”

“She's not a piece for you to fawn over.” Chastised Vulpes.
“I’m sure she doesn’t mind.”

“I do actually.”

“You sure cause I’m here thinking I must be in heaven.”

“Sweet mother of God.” she groaned, he was insufferable. “Listen here dickhead, I was tasked for getting you back alive, but nothing was said about it being in one piece. Fucking touch me, you lose that limb.”

“Well, alrighty. She always this hard to get?” he queried Vulpes.

“Don’t lump me in with the likes of you.” The Texan backing away quickly in surrender.

“Fine, jeez, let’s get back to my father.” he whined like the animals he reared.

The proceeded back the way they came, Vulpes staying firmly between the pair. As they reached the stairs up she indicated for the brat to be quiet as they headed back along the corridor. The still had the “chefs” at the top to deal with. They kept low as they approached, Six switching the the pistol before checking the room. Vulpes by her side, she caught his eye and he indicated which one she should remove. They pulled back to the shuffling Ted, he was constantly fidgeting.

“Go back to the wine store.” she ordered, Vulpes returning to retrieve the machine gun as she checked her own piece. “Keep your head down and only come out when we tell you.” still Ted didn’t move. “What wasn’t I clear about? Get into that room. Unless you’d like to punch the armoured flamethrower wielding cannibals to death?” she snapped, which finally got him moving. Pistol checked, she stepped into the room first, keeping on the balls of her feet, Vulpes followed suit, taking position behind his target. On his count they pulled the trigger simultaneously, they never knew what hit them.

“Please can you get him?” Vulpes asked. “Mars give me strength not to strangle the brat.”

“If I go, I definitely will strangle him.” she sighed. “Together?”
“Agreed.”

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Vulpes wished their god awful shouting would stop. Their reunion was becoming it’s own ridiculous pantomime and he had little patience remaining.

“I should kill them all, no better I won't send any more food to these sick fuckers. Starve them out.” roared Heck.

“How would that fucking help?” Shouted the Courier, clearly her patience was thin as well. “The Ultra-Luxe is where the corruption is and we've killed the majority; only one remains. The remainder will have a bounty for my head and I will gladly send my response at the end of my gun barrel.” She retorted with a vitriolic temper he had not seen, to the outward eye she was composed, but her fingers danced, eager for violence. “The rest of The Strip is innocent! Starving those not involved makes you as much of a monster as them! If you really want to stick it to them hold up you end of the bargain and deal with this man at your lowest fucking rates, you'll fuck em better that way. But lay one finger... block one food delivery... I will consider you as monstrous as they are... and that would put you on my list just like them.” She grinned that could only be described as bloodthirsty.

“Ah… well… yes...I see your logic.” Spluttered the fat man.

“Good. I’ll be waiting over there to be sure. Your lowest rates remember?” Without waiting for confirmation, she ordered a water and a glass and returned to their table in the corner. Vulpes was impressed, the hulking Texan was vulnerable, she had bled him like a pig with her words and the legion would get their food at a better rate. He would have to get her a generous gift in recompense.

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“Shall we?” Vulpes stood at the end of the table hand extended in invitation. The Courier stood and took his hand, and arm as he led them from the Ultra-luxe, his business concluded.

“I trust that Gunderson upheld his end of the deal?”
“Wonderfully so, our men will eat.” He smiled. “Your help is greatly appreciated.”

“Everyone needs to eat, regardless of their master.”

“Caesar will be most pleased that you aided us.”

“And are you pleased with me?” she purred.

“I was impressed how you handed the Texans their balls.”

“Then your praise is enough for me.” Six gathered her coat from the lobby and he helped her into her jacket. The night was loud and full of drunks as they stepped leisurely onto the street. Vulpes maintained a veneer of civility but his repulsion ran deep. He couldn’t wait to get away from the city in the morning.

“So, now that your business is done, will you return to the fort?” Six asked.

“Don’t you mean ‘we will be returning’?” he smirked. “Don’t forget I won the bet.”

“Ah shit, I thought I’d managed to distract you enough.” She giggled weakly. “I am able to leave in the morning, my companions are content for now. I’ll let Mr. House know tonight that I am going with you, he had plans for me to visit the Legion anyway.”

“Plans?” he inquired.

“Yep, but you know what brain trauma is like, I ‘forgot’ what my orders were. Got distracted.” she tried to brush and dismiss his interest.

“The details would reassure me you are not a threat. To kill you now would be a waste.”

“Such a charmer! But we need to know each other a little better first. Perhaps by the time we get to the fort I’ll have a better idea of whom to follow and share such information with. I swear to you, if it was a danger to Caesar then I would let you know” She paused at the gate before the part
of the strip containing the Lucky 38, the looming epitaph and concrete monstrosity of the Strip’s leader. “It's probably best we depart here, House has cameras everywhere, none more so than at the Casino, I wouldn’t want you exposed.”

“Noted and appreciated,” he paused, thoughtful. “I will wait for you at the main gates to the Strip tomorrow just after dawn, please come equipped for a trek.” she nodded in response, her jacket pulled tight against the cold. This woman was what Caesar believed could win them the desert? She was fragile, yet vicious with a determination many of his own men lacked. Caesar had ordered him to do anything to win her over, a prospect he found distasteful just another nameless profligate whore… but instead, he found himself intrigued. “I find that tonight has been an unexpected pleasure.”

“Then goodnight Mr. Fox.” She smiled and gave him a sweet peck on the cheek. How freely she gave her affection. “Pleasant dreams.”

Chapter End Notes

...and there we go! The first arc is complete...Now Vulpes and Six begin their journey into the desert.

Thank you for your comments they are really appreciated and encouraging!
The early Mojave sun was already at an uncomfortable level, Six’s hat doing little to provide respite. Bag restocked and purified water stored safely she stepped out into freeside. The morning was quiet, a brief respite between drunks and their hangovers. The securitrons filled her path with their cameras, feeding her position to Mr. House. Victor had been a mother hen checking off everything she had with her. She almost had to slash his wheels so that he wouldn't follow.

The gates to freeside creaked their usual symphony as she headed out. The block around the entrance was still quiet with the people afraid to try and break in. Six walked out towards the ruined buildings, in the shadow of the closest building he was waiting. She knew it was Vulpes, in a place full of miscreants only he could stand tall and proud as if the shit didn't stick to his boots like the rest of them. However there was one small kindness; the terrible suit was gone.

“Mornin’”

“Six, nice to see you are awake. Let us be heading off.”

“Do you have the coordinates? I can plot us a path on my pip-boy.” She carefully typed the coordinates he gave and saw the distance they had to cover. “Hmmm, we can rest up at my safehouse at Novac, as long as we're not in a certain primary colour we should be safe.”

“That would be beneficial. As our bet stands, I swore to escort you safely to the cove or a place of your choosing should I not convince you of our cause.”

“Thank you, I imagine it isn't very beneficial for you to be escorting me.”

“After yesterday I am in your debt, but Caesar has also deemed your visit a priority.”

“Fair enough.” The heavy doors that kept the desert at bay creaked to life, the rusted mechanisms rattling against the metal. “Seems like getting a hole in my head was the path to fame.”

The wind remained relatively low, the dust barely reaching their knees as they walked. Keeping her face wrap on they strode out purposefully into the desert. Vulpes was a quiet travelling companion, if she didn't ask him a question he remained quiet unless there was something essential to say. Around noon they took shelter at the Grub n’ Gulp rest stop. Vulpes went to secure some rations while she caught up on the local gossip.

“Brahmin?” He offered. “Not much else to be honest.”

“Thanks.” She used her combat knife to carve a chunk, skewing it on the tip of the blade. “Not bad. There's been a lot of NCR patrols lately especially around the stations and junctions. They've been raiding local farms trying to seize food. It seems they are equally as desperate for food as you and that won’t be improving anytime soon.” Vulpes grinned with satisfaction. “So, we've been
travelling a few hours but all I know that you favour your ripper and can move quickly over rough
terrain.”

“What is it you want to know?”

“I don't know know really. What is your favourite food?”

“Sweet things, or meat. They are a rare treat compared to rations.”

“What is your favourite colour? Or is it that obvious?”

Vulpes quirked a smile. “Actually I prefer blue, deep like clouds before a storm or that of water.
Deep and dark but calming.”

“Mmmmm the desert is all similar in colour bar the strip. How about…”

“Do I not get a chance to ask? I think I am owed two questions.”

“As you wish, please do not let me make you feel deprived.” She chuckled.

“Your favourite weapon?”

“My pistol called ‘That Gun’ and a rifle. I prefer my enemies further away if possible.”

“But you handled yourself well enough at the casino.”

“Luck and brute strength, don't forget that I was actually slashed.”

“You have a point.” He continued eating his steak. “I could teach you.”

“Please, it's definitely a weakness.”

“Gladly, I wouldn't want to rely on guns too much.”

“Secondly, what is the Lucky 38 like inside? No one has ever been seen entering until you.”

“It’s…complicated. It is beautiful, preserved architecture and grandeur from before the war. Luxuries you can hardly imagine. Fabric that doesn't change and dresses just like the one I wore. It contains riches and wealth from a time we have never known. But…”

“But…?”

“It's a tomb. Everything is pristine, like nothing happened, perfumes, silk, soft beds even running water! I can't complain I really the benefits but, I never feel wholly comfortable. Probably doesn't help my boss has cameras watching the whole time.”

“How invasive.”

“You have no idea, it's part of the reason why I'm always wandering, I feel way more comfortable in the desert. At least it is alive.”

They are the rest of their meal in silence, a few merchants passed by but the road was still relatively quiet. The relentless heat keeping many stationary. He watched the steady rise and fall of the courier's chest as she napped, the heat preventing them from leaving the shade of the food
station. The Nuka cola she had bought him warm and sweet as he sipped keeping watch.

Her questions had been innocent before, simple attempts at “small talk” but he wondered how long it would take for the more difficult ones to follow. Vulpes continued to drink the sweet liquid, his mind focused on how best to approach the difficult topics he barely noticed the young waitress trying to get his attention.

As 2 o’clock came and went the heat broke and they could continue. The road was relatively empty bar the odd gecko. The fell into an easy rhythm. The Courier would wound the incoming attacker her marksmanship was excellent, many were near death or dead before they got to him. His ripper dispatching them efficiently.

They set up camp in a rickety shack nestled between some rocks. It was hardly secure, there was no walls, but it was better than the ground. He offered to keep watch and scout around, the courier working on getting food together. The Mojave was exquisite at sunset, but also more dangerous, the half-light disguising many in the shadows.

Vulpes scouted around the local area, there was a large base west of their position, an old world building still in tact. To the south lay smaller encampment and open desert. When he returned the courier already had a small fire underway, the remains of a crate smashed up nearby.

“You ok for more Brahmin? It's still fresh from the stop this morning.”

“Lovely.”

“How do you like it? Almost raw, medium, well done or charcoal?” She smirked.

“Anything not burnt would be an improvement.”

“No problemo. You alright to keep watch?”

With a large rock face at their back he focused on the potential dangers behind. A precautionary mine placed atop the stack to prevent anyone climbing over. The courier handed him his steak on a tin lid, he cut pieces at ate in silence, they both watched the sunset in silence.

“I love the sunset, when travelling it's the calmest part of the day like everything is shutting down. Only those who wander the dark are left.” She spoke facing the horizon. “Not like the strip, not that sort of night-life, more like being still that I can breathe. Sorry, it's just nice having someone who isn't a mess as company.”

He hummed in acknowledgement, perhaps he wouldn't have to dig so deep to get information after all.

“Why travel with them then?”

“Profligates you mean?” She sighed. “I guess to you that's what we are.” She picked some more at her meat, her shoulders slumped. Had he misjudged the time? He didn't mean it as an offence. “I suppose when I came to I was alone and afraid. Having someone to talk to or who would make sure I wasn't going nuts was a comfort. I even tried to help them for what good it does me.”

“They seem loyal?”

“As far as they can be.” She relapsed back into silence once more and he didn't broach it again. Her friends were a sore point, a weakness? Could he exploit it?
“Do you have friends in the Legion?” She asked quietly. “As a Frumentarii can you even trust anyone?”

“I do have friends and some alliances. Loyalty is important in the Legion … To Caesar, to friends and associates.”

“Honourable, if a high standard.”

“Just so.”

“Do you want to sleep? I’ll take first watch, I'll wake you up in 5 hours or so?” She replied, her melancholy carefully masked, but he could see she was flatter than her usual self.

“All right.”

----

The first few days of travelling were slow, they would speak, and although Vulpes shared, it was still new ground. Six felt like she was constantly walking on eggshells, afraid to piss him off and his reluctance to share became frustrating. It was all leading to a conflict she wasn't sure they were ready to have.

She had to admit though that they made an effective team, the few fiends that blocked their way were easily dispatched and she had even managed to scavenge a few supplies much to his dismay. She had tried to explain scavenging bought bullets and medicine, but it was clearly a sentiment he didn't share.

Still heading south, she noticed a familiar blip. “There’s a vault not far from here, can we go look? There's good salvage usually inside.”

“Perhaps later? We don't want to stray too far from our purpose.”

“But… it would be easier with the two of us…I could make a lot for the future…”

“No, we continue…”

The first sound of the bullet split the air like the crack of the whip, they both dropped to the ground as the sound of more split the air.

“Vipers, fucking great!” She snapped, lining up her rifle. There was no obvious direction the shooters were aiming from, nor were there any charging forward. They were clearly a cautious lot. “I can't see any shooters!” Vulpes was surveying their surroundings in a similar panic, she noticed the arc of an incoming grenade. “GRENADE!”

Throwing herself towards Vulpes she tackled him to the ground. The grenade exploded showering dirt over them the crater smoking where he once stood. The courier winced as some shrapnel embedded in her skin. Another followed closely, she scrambled to the side half-dragging Vulpes with her as he dived behind cover with her.

“What were you thinking!” He snarled, his face close to hers, she winced as he roughly checked her over, she tried to bat him away to look over but he yanked her back down. “Let me see.” She slapped his hand away shooting her rifle at the space behind their vulnerable flank, one less Viper to deal with.

“We’re sitting ducks here!” She snapped. “Can we get any clear eyes on them?”
“I can see one,” he pointed and she followed with her with her barrel taking the shot as soon as her sights lined up. “What about the vault?”

“Too unknown, could be worse.”

“At least it would funnel them.”

“No!” He snapped. “Another there!” He called and she shot.

“This is not…”

“Just point and shoot!” he snapped pointing out another. “Again!”

The Courier continued to point and shoot, where Vulpes pointed, the chem fiends getting sloppy and impatient. It made them easier to shoot but they were getting reckless. Glass smashed near her feet, burning alcohol spraying everywhere. A few hot splashes catching on her clothes.

“How many more?”

“Two, one there.” She picked off the selected target. “Leave the last to me.”

He ducked off between the rocks, Six firing blindly to distract the remaining Viper from their attack. The battlefield went quiet, the sounds of footsteps on rock the only indication of people there. One heartbeat... two...she counted the moments until the sounds scuffle broke the calm.

“We are safe.” Vulpes called as if he hadn't just fought a man to the death.

With a groan Six rolled onto her knees and got to her feet, the gravel from the explosion embedded deeper than she expected. Reappearing from behind the rock she watched as Vulpes hopped down the rocks gracefully, a man clearly used to combat and moving easily. As he drew closer he paused at the blackened crater where he once stood. Holstering her rifle Six climbed between the rocks scavenging everything she could before returning to collect her fox.

“Come on there's a building a short while ahead. We can heal up and sort through this crap.” But he did not respond. “Vulpes?” She asked, placing her hand against his shoulder. “Let's go.”

Chapter End Notes

Hope you enjoyed the chapter! Originally it was one very long chapter that didn't seem to end so I broke it up a bit so that it's not an overly long chapter!
Her Prince

Chapter Notes

Just an FYI
Italics = character thought.
bold = text from a book.

P.S. some smut this time! (but not in a way you think!)

I hope you enjoy! I wanted to get this out before the next school term starts as I'll be juggling this with writing reports. Wishing you all well!

If it had been a moment longer…

Vulpes shuddered at the realisation of how close he had been to death. If she hadn’t…

He looked to see where she was walking, her familiar gait altered with a limp. Silently he followed and kept pace.

She led them towards a building, unlike their previous accommodation this one had a roof. The Courier stopped and crouched drawing her rifle. As the shots rang out he charged, the adrenaline keeping the shock at bay, his ripper was an extension of his arm and he wielded it well. With brutal efficiency he despatched the Vipers, each swing bringing him back to the moment, back to feeling alive. He spotted a final Viper duck into the building so he followed, a hunter chasing down his prey. Fear could be so tangible, people described they could taste it and while on the hunt he would have to agree. The Viper had backed himself into the corner of a side room pitifully begging for his life. As he brought his ripper down on the man’s hands he wondered how the man must feel as his life seeped from his veins. Did he not appreciate his redemption at his hands?

The Courier arrived as he was wiping the gore from his face, she still had her sidearm drawn despite the limp.

“Thought I’d come to the rescue.” She smiled. “Better late than never.” as she drew closer to look inside he pointedly closed the door, afraid of spooking her.

“I’m afraid the last one is a sight for sore eyes, but… before you complain,” he nudged a small pile with his toe. “Here is all the scavenge they had.”

“Thanks, you’re learning but I think I need to sit down first.” she wandered past him into another room taking him at his word the man was dead.

After checking the building over he locked and bolted the door, with a bench as an extra barricade and the mine from the previous night as overkill. He was feeling optimistic for a good night of sleep. With the door secured he went in search of the courier.

“The door should hold till morn…ing…”

“Well don’t just stare, give me hand or cover your eyes.”

Vulpes stared openly and hungrily took in the sight of the courier topless. He could
leave...probably should but… “What do you need?” He replied.

“Can you check my back? There are places I can't reach and I need to get any embedded bits out.” She handed him a pair of tweezers. “Much appreciated.”

She leant forward, forearms braced against the table to steady herself. He gently brushed her hair aside, keeping touch to a minimum. Her prone position was eliciting an eager response from his body, long stretches of sun kissed skin marked with thin scars. Were it any other person, he would delight on exploring each one with his lips. But the guest of Caesar was not someone he could touch even if she seduced him. His orders were clear; she was to be unharmed and untouched. He could follow orders. Methodically he worked his way from shoulder towards her hips. Every now and then he would hold her still with one hand to get a particularly deep piece. He would soothe her hiss with gentle caresses of his thumb against her skin.

“That's twice in two days I’ve patched you up, is this a regular occurrence?”

“What? Being injured? I suppose so, there's always someone picking a fight and I guess I don't really think about how often I patch myself or others up.”

“You appear like this to all your companions?” He felt a low rumble of anger in his gut at thought of the NCR dog touching her like this.

“It's just skin and I think removing shrapnel while I bleed all over is probably the least sexy things I could imagine.” He snorted at her joke. “Unless that's your thing of course, playing doctor.” She teased, looking back at him over her shoulder.

“It is not.”

“Then totally unsexy.” She groaned as he pulled a particularly deep fragment out. He shouldn't engage… he shouldn't… but…

“I don't know, seeing you bent over a table makes a rather tantalising picture.” He grinned relishing the growing blush on her cheeks, as she buried her head in her hands.

“Perrrrverrrrt.” She whined from behind fingers, her yelp as he pinched her roughly was comedic.

“That's twice you've called me that,” he growled. “I'd use your last chance wisely…”

“Or?”

“Do you really want to find out?” She opened her mouth to respond but paused thinking better of it. “That is the last on your back.” he added.

“Great. Would you wipe the wounds down with whiskey? Most can heal or their own, I think one stimpack will speed up the deeper ones.”

“I hope this trend of injury and medical treatment doesn't become a daily cycle.”

“Well, it just cements the rumour that I can't die. You know, burn her, shoot her, beat her but she still doesn't die. Like a human radroach, very resilient.”

“I cannot refute that based on the evidence. Whiskey is done.” He watched as she jabbed a stimpack into her side.

“Thanks Vulpes, I’ll make a Doctor out of you yet.” She redressed and stretched languidly, his eyes
tracing the contours of her body. “Do you think we can make it to Novac tomorrow?”

“Perhaps if we aren't waylaid.” He rifled through his pack pulling out some boxes. “Blamco Mac and cheese?”

“Ooh chef's special. Yes please.”

The Courier sat comfortably on her sleeping bag on top of one of the mattresses. Vulpes lay on the mattress beside her, again it had been another comfortable night. She had learned more about the Legion and it hadn't lead to shouting. In front of her she had her white cloth with her guns freshly cleaned and maintained.

“Do you need anything repairing?” She asked, “How is your ripper?”

“It should be adequate until we get to the Cove.”

“Well I can take a look now, I'm pretty nifty with these things.”

“I will be fine.”

Six packed away her repair kit and got out a pre-war book she had been reading, clearly he had had enough of conversation and they had the luxury of security. A soft crackle broke the silence, for once not from her pip boy.

“Excuse me a moment.” Vulpes pulled a small black box from his bag and disappeared.

Interesting… she mused, turning on the radio to give him privacy. She could almost picture Boone ordering her to listen in and spy or to stab him in his kidneys. Instead, she turned the radio up louder and returned to her book.

“But I don't love him!” Cried Isabelle, “He is a cad and a villain. He may have the wealth father needs and connections to the admiralty but he is nothing but cheating cur who would use me for my station until there was nothing left.”

Isabelle clutched her lace handkerchief close as tears threatened to fall her corset feeling too tight…

“Seriously?” She giggled. It was so overblown, and flouncy and she couldn’t believe it was once considered entertainment.

“But the Sergeant is best for you, best for all of us.” Stated her father. “He will bring prosperity to all with this alliance you selfish little girl.”

“Is it selfish for wanting to live my own life? Make my own choices?”

“Yes it is you stupid little girl.”. Snapped her Father. “This is why I must choose for you!”

Six groaned, the argument was growing boring in the way this book made everything dramatic. Perhaps skipping ahead would liven it up a bit.

“Oh please, my lord.” Isabelle begged breathlessly. “I have craved you all day and don't wish to waste the night.”
This was certainly more lively.

“My dear sweetheart, how can I refuse such a sweet request.” Her lover smiled green eyes twinkling in the candlelight. He leaned forward and brushed his lips against hers, both a kiss and a caress as her corset felt tight across her ample bosom. Her chest heaving as the kiss deepened. As he pulled away she watched his icy blue eyes...

Wait, what?

As he pulled away she watched his deep emerald eyes stare back at her. He licked his lips as his hands bracketed her waist his thumbs teasing the underside of her breasts. She moaned wantonly running her fingers through his short dark hair....

No, not again.

...through his short blond hair. She wanted to be devoured by this man, her lover. With a growl he fisted his palms in the front of her dress tearing it in twain, his fingers quickly loosening her corset until he could free her breasts. His mouth latched on sucking hard and teasing the nipple with his tongue as she wantonly moaned for him.

“That's it love.” She whimpered. “Please!” She whined as he tore her dress further leaving her in nothing but her shift and underwear.

“Silk underwear Courier?’

Courier? Fucking hell.

“Silk underwear Isabelle?’

“Only the best for you.” She whimpered as that too was removed and her legs spread so he knelt between her thighs the bulge of his underwear ground against her precious treasure. Slowly she watched his engaging eyes and reached between them unbuttoning his trousers and freeing his glorious cock she had so fantasised about.

Six looked around the room, Vulpes was still absent. There was nothing wrong with indulging surely?

Eagerly Isabelle stroked his engorged length rubbing his cock head against her dripping slit. Slowly he pressed his length inside as she kissed and bit his neck, he was so big and he stretched her beautifully.

“Relax love.” he purred, slowly rocking his hips against Isabelle, rubbing against her deepest spots as she whimpered and whined beneath him.

“Please” she begged as he drew out and slowly rolled his hips fucking her slowly as her nails bit into his shoulders. “Harder,” she begged and pleaded till he was ravishing her like and animal her breasts bouncing as his forceful thrusts made her moan lewdly. He slipped a hand between them and rubbed her clit and she shattered into a thousand pieces, her cunt like a velvet vice around his cock as he shuddered and came filling her sweet clasp as she came only one word from her lips “Vulpes!”

The Courier yelped, brought harshly back to reality, one hand still under the waistband of her
underwear, her finger pressed against her clit. Quickly she pulled back and straightened her
clothing, her travel buddy still absent, thank god as she didn’t know how she could look him in the
eye again. How could she look herself in the eye again? In honesty she knew the answer already.
The embarrassment would fade and she would bury the feelings and desires she had once more in a
steel cage no one could ever find or exploit.

“Sorry for the delay.” Vulpes announced his return from the doorway before hiding the radio once
more in his bag. “What is it you are reading?” he asked. “It seems to have engaged you quite well.”

“This?” she stammered. “This is just trash, nothing special.”

“Oh? Can I see?”

“No!”

“No?”

“No. It’s… um one of Cass’s books, rather improper for a man of the Legion.” she joked hiding it
under her pillow. “She sneakedit in my bag knowing that I would eventually run out of things to
read and need something to do.”

“What’s it called?”

“Her Prince - A tale of love for the ages with a spicy twist.” she read from the front cover keeping
the pillow as a barrier. “An adult adventure between a beautiful heiress and her star-crossed lover.”

“It sounds rather… dissolute.”

“It is. Cass said that it was called a ‘Bodice ripper’ in the past. Not my cup of tea but sadly, I’ve
read everything else I brought with me. It’ll have to do until Novac.”

“How does it end?”

“I don’t know, I hope she gets her choice of husband but judging that the back cover is torn off and
the last word is bosom. I doubt I’ll ever know.”

“Then why read it?”

“It fills the silent void in my head, plus I focused on it so you had privacy.”

“How considerate.” he replied dryly.

“Well if you’re going to be like that, I’ll bid you goodnight.” she scowled putting the book away
and relaxing back on her blanket. When he chuckled at her childish attitude she growled rolling
onto her side showing him her back.

“Are you really mad?”

“No” she sighed. “Just embarrassed and tired. I’m always a bit pissy when tired.”

“I see.” she could almost hear the smirk. Groaning she rolled over to face him, taking the higher
ground and all that.

“Do you read, for pleasure?”

“I do, mostly books about strategy and latin. It was how Caesar wished me to learn the language,
besides through speaking. I enjoyed them because they gave me an edge, not just for duty.”

“If the Legion is like Rome, then I suppose you need to keep an edge to maintain your role otherwise someone will take it from you.”

“Exactly the case. What book was this?”

“A historical textbook, I found it interesting, gave some insights.”

“May I see it?”

“Sure, if I uh, remember where I’ve put it.” she smiled.

“But you are right, Legion life encourages each man to be ambitious and rise up the ranks. I took this role from someone else but none have dared challenge me for a few years.”

“Sounds tiring, always looking for a dagger in the dark.”

“I find it rather invigorating.”

“So where do you hope to climb next?”

“Next? The only ones above me are Lanius and Caesar. I would not dare to lay a finger on the son of Mars. Besides, I am good at what I do, I could lead the army but I would not do so in the way Caesar requires. There is more than one way to make the people your own.”

“Lanius is the big dude right? Leads the army?” she asked searching her bag for something sweet.

“Big dude?” he chuckled. “You mean the monster of the east? Clearly you have not been listening to the stories carefully.”

“All I’ve heard is that he’s a brutal man especially towards women and his slaves. I guess they are one and the same. But I have to question his capability. You have been in the Mojave how long now? And the person people fear most and refer to is you. Well the idea of you seen as you’re like a ghost to the NCR.” The Courier took a bite of a Yucca fruit almost choking when she saw Vulpes smile of pure pleasure and pride.

“I appreciate the flattery, but the Frumentarii are not the main force of the Legion and in the Legate’s eyes we are beneath his soldiers, he views us as dishonest.”

“No fucking way.” she cursed. Vulpes nodded in reply. “But Nipton...I can’t think of anything more Legion. You know… the crucifixions, the red bulls everywhere let alone the lesson a poor, innocent and adorable Courier spread? How can he not see you as a loyal Legionnaire?”

“Because I work in the dark, my men work indirectly. He doubts we are capable as honourable warriors and that our methods are underhanded. I admit, I find some… unsavoury. But the acts are necessary in order to ensure the safety of Caesar and the future of my people.”

“I can understand that.” she replied.

“Caesar values my work, understands the need for it. I fear what may come when the Legate becomes Caesar.”

“How do you mean?”
“When Caesar dies, Lanius will take his place. His word will be law and I will be unable to go against his orders. If we are lucky then my men and I will be dispersed into the general ranks, I may be a centurion. The likelihood is that he will have me executed as an example, to show that my methods were against the rules and my men may be punished or given new roles. Either way…”

“Either way, we need to keep Caesar alive and Lanius under careful watch.”

“Exactly.”

“I don’t envy you.” replied Six, the information he shared weighed heavily on her shoulders, a crushing weight of responsibility. One she had avoided until recent events. “Thank you for trusting me, though I’m sure if I show any sign of telling your secret you’d silence me.”

“Indeed.”

“Would you ever become Caesar?” she asked innocently.

“It is not something I have thought on, Caesar has always seemed immortal to me and it would be an unsavoury action.”

“Well if it is as you say, I’d certainly find a way to become Caesar.”

“Perhaps I will.” he mused. “Perhaps I will.”
"Home sweet home." sighed the Courier as they stood on a hill looking down on the dilapidated building which was the centre of Novac. “Ok, one final thing.”

“Yes?”
“Well, I don’t know if you knew, but this is where I met a certain grumpy ass sniper and although he may still be in Vegas, his friend isn’t and they don’t particularly like well…”

“Legion?”
“Bingo! So we need to disguise you, to be a bit more profligate?”
“I already am.” he gestured to his unmarked armour. “I think I know how to be a profligate Six.”
“Well…” he sighed as she seemed to shrink under his gaze. “You stand a little too straight a little too proud.”
“And?”
“Well…”
“I’m not changing it.”
“Well with that solved, I hope that it’s good enough, cause I don’t know if a sniper bullet to the face is survivable.”
“You survived.”
“That was a small calibre pistol. Sniper bullets leave big exit wounds. Think about an exploding mutfruit.”
“I am aware.”
“Fine then.” she pouted.

----

The walk was short to town, the familiar glint of a scope glinting from the dinosaur’s mouth. Rent free and with it’s own lockable safe Novac was a haven from Mr. House’s cameras. Keeping a casual pace she led him up the stairs to her abode. Her biggest fear replaced by the uncertainty of whether or not she had left her underwear on display, which was a real possibility.

“Wait just minute?” she asked. “I uh… need to make sure that the room is… uh… safe.”
“I don’t understand how it could be a danger?”
“Alright, I need to tidy up.”
“You get two minutes.”
Six dashed in and slammed the door to prevent Vulpes sneaking a peek anymore than was needed. What the hell was I doing to leave it in such a state? In a state of panic, Six grabbed her clothes and shoved them into a drawer, the plates were thrown in the sink and her dishes were dumped in the sink.

“Times up!”

“NOOOOO!” she screeched clutching a bra to her chest. “NOOOOOOOOOOO!” she screamed when she realised he had seen it. “More time! More time!”

“If it is any consolation it is not as bad as the legionaries tents.”

“That is strangely NOT comforting.” she squeaked tucking away the last of her things while he quietly surveyed the rest of the flat.

“It is reasonable accomodation.”

“It is free and safe and most importantly no cameras. Feel free to relax. I’m going to get some food and water for washing up. The drain works, but water is still buckets. You can get a decent bath going though.”

“Thank you.”

“And needless to say, don’t answer the door unless you have a reallllly good reason too.”

-----

With the Courier gone, Vulpes took the time to really look at the Couriers apartment. Despite the general chaos of her belongings, the room was rather modest and well kept. She had a cupboard full of clothes in various sizes and enough armour to outfit a contubernium. Let alone her weapon collection, he was impressed at what she had amassed. Her kitchen was stocked with not only junk food, but some simple ingredients. The bathroom was similarly sparse with some towels and some homemade cleaners. He noticed the large bed and her bookshelf that looked comfortable and clean at least. He took the time to examine the book titles, a range of tomes and some more of her friends bawdry novels.

It reflected her perfectly. Simple, straightforward and honest. In moments he had cracked her safe and found it was stuffed with documents and information rather than wealth as he had expected. There was a hidden depth to her, suggesting she was not to be taken lightly. Footsteps on the walkway. With practiced speed he closed and relocked the safe before sitting on the edge of the bed, untying his armour. The picture of innocence.

“Only me.” called the Courier, pushing the door open with her hip. Ever the gentlemen he stood and helped take the buckets from her hand and she placed the parcel on the table. “Thank you.” she smiled. Was she really this naive? Or was it an act?

“No problem at all.” he could wait to learn more. “Do you need anything else?”

“Nope. I picked up some ingredients for stew. Oh I also found some gumdrops.” he caught the packet she threw at him. “Do you want to clean up first? Use whatever water you need and just refill the buckets when you’re done.”

-----

Did the room always feel so small?
Six did her best to distract herself from the rather imposing Frumentarius sitting on her bed. He was quiet still, but where in the desert it was relaxing, indoors it felt oppressive or perhaps that was her lingering guilt for the previous night.

“Do you have any non-armoured clothes?” She asked him as he took the buckets in the bathroom.

“No. Why bother?”

“It’s odd to wear armour when in town. Here.” She rummaged in the closet and pulled out a pair of trousers and a button up shirt in blue. “So you blend in.”

“I wouldn’t want to stand out now would I? Nothing in red?.” He smirked taking the clothes and locking the door.

The silence in his absence was equally frustrating. In the quiet of the room she could hear the sound of water pouring, her traitorous mind conjuring images of the body the water ran down. Would he be muscular or lean? Would the skin under his armour be smooth if she rubbed her cheek against it?

Fucking hell. She groaned internally. She needed a cold shower fast. To block the tempting sounds she turned on her pip boy removing it and set it on the worktop as a radio tuning into Radio New Vegas. As a familiar tune crackled into life she stepped into the kitchen to make dinner. There was nothing sexy about onions.

A knock at the door broke her concentration. Who could be calling at this hour? Placing the carving knife on the side she stepped towards the bathroom knocking on the door. Vulpes opened it a crack, not enough for her to see through, he must have heard the door.

“I don't know who's here,” she said to him. “It’s up to you whether to stay or come out.” The knocking grew more insistent. “I'm coming, for fucks sake.” She checked the spyhole before opening the door. “What the fuck…” Six opened the door. “Boone.” She announced loudly. “Why aren't you in New Vegas?”

“Oh thank god.” He sighed pulling her into a bear hug.

“Boone?” She asked peeling him away and he indicated to whisper “You alright buddy?”

“I saw your note and couldn't sit by while that fucker kidnapped my friend.”

“Fucker? Oh wait, you mean Vulpes.”

“Step aside so I can deal with him.” He whispered.

“He’s not here.” She replied loudly unmoving from the door.

“It's alright I won't let him hurt you.” He said firmly pushing the door open to get past. She watched Boone carefully, she had known he wouldn't be pleased she follow Vulpes, but to stalk her out here?

“He’s not here Boone, we split up near one of the NCR camps said he had some work to do.”

“Then who’s bag is that?” He growled kicking the pack. “Why are you lying to me? I'm just trying to help?”

“I told you Craig,” she replied calmly sipping a Nuka Cola from the table by the window. “Vulpes isn’t here.”
“Then who is!” He shouted. “Maybe I should check their pack myself?”

“Hey Honey, I'm all done now.”

Six thought her heart was going to stop in her chest. Gone was the familiar tone of Vulpes voice instead it had more of a drawl like most people on the strip; perfectly average. She turned to face him, the bottle of Nuka cola falling from her lips as she just stared open mouthed and in awe.

Vulpes was shirtless.
Vulpes was shirtless and still damp.
Vulpes was shirtless and he was better than she had imagined.
Vulpes was shirtless and she wanted to trace each muscle with her fingers and lips.

Hot damn.

“Six?” He questioned as she openly leered at him. He held the shirt she had given him in his hand tossing it aside as he came close and pulled her into his arms positioning her so she faced Boone his arm wrapped protectively around her stomach. “Who's this?” He purred lips ghosting against her ear, goosebumps raising at his touch.

“Just what I want to fucking know.”

“This is my friend Craig Boone, he travelled with me a while back.”

“Nice to meet you. Name's James.”

“Where did you two meet?”

“Out at the Grub n' Gulp rest stop, we got acquainted over some Brahmin and hit it off.”

“He was looking for work so I suggested he headed with me towards Novac and the outpost.”

“and we grew real close.” The courier could practically feel his shit eating grin. Holy fucking hell.

“Seriously?”

“What, I can't have a male companion?”

“You've never had one before.”

“Well life isn't absolutes Craig.”

“Certainly is for some things.” he growled. “So where is the fucker then?”

Six opened her mouth to answer but it came as a broken moan as Vulpes hand wandered under her shirt his fingers pressing against her stomach gently caressing. “We split up like I told you. He got a message he was needed near Ranger Station Alpha I think. He wasn't exactly open.”

Boone holstered his gun and sat on the edge of the table. “What were you thinking leaving with him?”

“I was doing the task given to me, by Mr. house.”

“You know what the Legion is capable of, yet you're walking in like a lamb to the slaughter.”

“I know what I'm doing Boone. It is under control.”
“How is leaving alone, with a psycho like Vulpes a good idea.” Boone was clearly still irate, Six whimpered as Vulpes pressed another soft kiss against her neck. “You should have brought one of us along or kill the fucker.”

“I can handle Vulpes.” She felt him smile against her neck between kisses. Goddamn it felt good and she was not looking forward to the consequences.

“Honestly you can’t.”

“I'm sorry…” Vulpes interjected. “You're saying the woman who survived a bullet to the brain and tore through the desert can't handle something? I watched her shoot a man through the eye at 200m, she's terrifying… not some child.”

“Could have fooled me…” he muttered “Just some floozy after all…”

“That's fucking enough!” Six snapped. “I am not a child! I left by myself because you are so blinded by your hate that I can't achieve what I need to. Get off your fucking high horse! I needed your help early on because I was a mess. But all of you still treat me the same. I am capable and I can make my own choices!” She shouted.

“We were worried about you! This is the thanks we get!”

“I didn't ask for your help for this! I asked for you to trust me! To trust what I had to do! But NO. I'm apparently untrustworthy!” Six could feel the tears starting to form. “Why couldn't you just trust me?”

“Because you left with him! You chose him!” Boone slammed his fist on the table and she jumped shrinking against Vulpes. This was not the man she befriended weeks ago in the dinosaur or who helped her hunt the Khans. This Boone was different.

“You need to leave.” Vulpes snarled his arm wrapping tighter around her waist.

“Keep the fuck out of this pretty boy... and that's another thing after everything we went through together, whatever was growing between us you were quite happy to throw it away?”

“What thing? We are friends and nothing more because you were grieving for your wife. I have never thought of us that way.”

“Really? Cass said otherwise. But I never thought you'd go for some some pretty boy who waves himself in front of you just like a dog with a bone”

Vulpes stepped in front of the Courier, body tense with aggression. “You're leaving.” He stated and manhandling Boone out the door. “Think carefully before speaking to her again.” he snarled before slamming the door in Boone’s shocked face.

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Vulpes inwardly cursed as he slammed and barred the door against the Courier’s companion. At least Boone had bought their ruse as lovers but the man had pushed too far he knew enough to about Six to know she was none of those things. He looked over to where Six stood, she was still eerily still as if she was trying hard to disappear.

“Six…” he asked keeping his tone low and even. He opened his mouth to continue but found himself unsure of how to respond. His usual lies seemed lacking in the comfort she needed. She deserved more than that. When she looked at him he saw the damage done, tears clogged her eyes
as she clearly fought back tears.

“I guess you were right, no loyalty amongst profligates.” She sniffed. “I thought only our enemies could hurt me this bad.”

“I’m sorry.”

“Thanks… and I mean it, thank you. You stopped it getting worse.”

“I wish I could say I did it out of purely honourable reasons. But it was what I thought a lover might do.”

She smiled weakly, “I wouldn't have expected any less than a perfect performance.” He noted how she touched her neck where he kissed her. “But still you got rid of him. Thank you.”

“I’ll get the buckets filled,” he said, dressing.

“Be careful. I don't know what he might do.”

Vulpes exited the apartment metal buckets in hand and headed down to the pump. He had half expected Boone to be waiting at the bottom of the stairs but instead he was speaking to another man outside the dinosaur with Boone pointing in his direction. Wonderful. He filled the buckets taking care carrying them upstairs, losing little water on the way. When he opened the door the rich aromas of food surrounded him and made his stomach rumble. The Courier quietly hummed to herself as she stirred something on the pot. “Here's the water.” he placed the buckets in the bathroom before checking the lock on the door. “That smells delicious.”

“Brahmin stew and jacket potatoes in the oven.” She replied.

“Your friend isn't convinced about our story.”

“Mmmmmm” she replied.

“We will have to keep this ruse for longer.”

“Yes, Vulpes.” Her response was meek. He didn’t like it.

“I can take over if you want to wash.”

“Thank you V.”

“By the Gods stop!” He growled resisting the urge to grab her. She turned startled and watched him cautiously. “Enough of the meek courier ‘yes sir’ crap.” Her breathing was shallow and panicked. “You are greater than this, greater than what he said.”

“I turned my friend away, I must be …”

“Sensible, hurt, but not some broken thing. They are not children and you don’t have to coddle their feelings.”

“It hurts.”

“Betrayal does, deeper than any blade but it is survivable.” Six thought on what he said before a small giggle escaped.

“I never thought an legionary would be the one comforting me.”
“Neither would I… it is awkward and I would like to go back to our usual roles.”

“You the cunning Frumentarius and me, the immortal mailwoman?”

“Something like that yes.”

“I can manage that.” She smiled. “But for now James, being my lover will have to do.”

“I think I can suffer through that.”

“The stew should be fine, I think I need some music.”

Six stepped inside the bathroom glancing back at him one final time. As the sound of the lock clicked into place his face returned to neutral he no longer needed to pretend at least for a little while. The sound of the radio began to pour through the door, the Courier had it loud. Once more he opened the safe and continued his search. A small leather bound journal caught his attention, the scrawl in the inside cover suggested it was a diary.

Interesting...

He began to read.

Chapter End Notes

Phew! One more week down and an update. For now the Couriers companions disapprove of her actions and believing her to still be naive and traumatised. Someone needs to change and in time we will learn!

I hope you enjoyed reading! Next chapter --> Novac to Cottonwood Cove.
Six scrubbed down, each rinse took away another layer of grime and revealed the softness that lay beneath. It felt like digging through the earth to find the bones of a long dead creature. She scooped another healthy dose of her scrub hoping it would rub off her sins. The mixture was a combination of a pre-war cleanser (thanks to Mr. House and sand). By the time she finished her skin felt tender but soft and free from dirt that baked on. She uncorked her pilfered bottle of shampoo the sweet and smoky scent familiar and homely. She massaged the concoction into her hair and scalp taking care to untangle the knots.

Rinsing off, she surveyed herself in the mirror. More scars had been added to the patchwork of her body, she traced those she could reach like a familiar path on a map. She indulged in shaving her legs and underarms. A silly frivolity, it wasn't like anyone would see. But it felt good to do something. Since learning of these things at the Lucky 38 she loved the feel of shaved legs and feeling clean. She always felt glamorous afterwards, not that she was trying to impress anyone. But I bet his hands would feel great.

The evening felt warm. Her usual heavy clothes were swapped with shorts and a vest, her wet hair braided back to dry. Turning off the pip-boy she headed back into the main room, Vulpes was lying on the bed reading a book. It was better than staring the ceiling she supposed.

“Dinner’s ready,” she announced stirring the pot. “Come and get it if you want to eat.” She placed her jacket potato in the centre of the bowl and spooned her stew on top. If only she had some cheese.

“Excellent.” He grabbed his share and a Nuka cola and joined her. “I suppose you learned to cook from a book?” He asked between bites.

“How did you guess? That bad?”

“No, I saw it on your shelf actually.”

“Yeah, I almost forgot about it. I picked it up in Primm I think. I almost poisoned myself a few times trying to make simple things so started from the beginning again.”

“We learn basic recipes for things we can scavenge. Basic ration is a kind of stew-porridge crossover that gets refilled over the day. It is one of blandest things you will ever taste.”

“How do you cope? Sneak off in New Vegas to stuff your face with gum drops?”

“If you are lucky you have a slave who can cook, and if you're an officer such as myself you can buy in extra resources.”

“What do you do?”

“I personally have whatever my men prepare. I don't have time to cook nor a slave. When in Vegas
or on the road I can make simple meals or as you say … indulge.”

When dinner was finished and put away Vulpes returned to his book and the Courier stepped outside for a moment leaning on the balcony. Night had fallen and the general chatter around the campfire was dying down and people returning home.

“Six…”

“Boone.” She replied tartly.

“I’m…I’m sorry.” She watched him closely, and gestured for him to continue. “You were right about how we treated you and I guess I read things wrong...we…I thought I was helping.”

“I need to do this Boone, there are too many players on the board and it seems fate has left the choice to me.” She sighed. “I need your trust and support, the desert is on a tightrope at the minute.”

“But leaving with Vulpes…he is the third most wanted man in the desert. He isn't a safe man.”

“Think of it this way, Vulpes agreed to escort me unharmed. The fact he came, not Lanius means Caesar does not want me hurt or killed. With him I can get safely to the fort and my Pip-Boy will register it. I can scout out the camp and investigate further while under protection.”

“What if it's a trap.”

“Odds are it isn't. They need me for the same reason as the NCR and House.”

“But why go at all?”

She shrugged in response. “I saw an opportunity”

The stood together in silence for a while watching the world continue its merry way.

“I don't know I can go back to Vegas yet.” Boone mused breaking the silence. “Think I might stay here a while get my head straight.”

“Whatever you need buddy.”

“Six? Everything alright?”

“Yeah” she turned to him. “We sorted things out, for now.” She let him reach for her. His hands tugged at her waist pulling her close against him.

“Good, I wouldn't want to have to intervene again.”

“Nah we’re good. I might not like ya, but… be good to her… else you won't hear the bullet coming.”

“Trust me.” He smiled like a cat with the cream. “I will be taking very good care of her.” His arms pulled her close and her cheeks reddened as he looked at her like a lover would. She knew it was an act but… but she felt for once as if she was the only thing that mattered. What a clever fox he is. Time seemed to slow as he leaned in, his lips pressing against hers as she braced her hands on his chest. Six hummed at his touch, his arms held her close against his chest and she melted against him. Gods above it felt good to be touched by affection or desire. To feel a connection to another who didn't cringe away or belittle her.
“J...Jam...” she stuttered as he kissed her again, this time she pressed into him, his hand coming to lie against her cheek, his thumb tracing the soft skin there before gently pressing on her chin encouraging her to open to him. Common sense be damned… she did.

-----

How sweet his Courier tasted. She trembled in his arms, shy and hesitant to his kiss. He encouraged her to open up as his tongue teased hers and she responded to his touch. He let her chin go to run his fingers into her hair, it was soft and freshly washed and he could lead the kiss easier.

“I'll leave you two to it.” He heard Boone mumble awkwardly, the sniper leaving as he hoped. As the other man's footsteps sounded on the stairs he broke the kiss, the Courier was red and flushed, he smirked and she buried her face against his chest. Giving Boone a final look he grinned widely knowing he had won. The sniper snarled and stormed away in a rage. He knew he shouldn't tease but some people deserved to fucked with.

One thing was for certain, he knew the diary didn't lie.

Six nudged him away, enough so he let her go and followed her back into the room. Such a beautiful night and I'm having so much fun. He followed her back inside, his primary goal and curiosity satisfied.

“Why did you do that?” Six blurted out, pacing back and forth in the kitchen. “Did you really have to kiss me? God what is he gonna think?”

“I didn't realise I was so repulsive.”

“You're not…” she looked horrified at his statement. “I didn't mean it like that! But why carry out that scene, we're not actually dating.”

“No, but he was hanging around too much it was a risk.” He could hardly admit he had finished reading her diary and wanted to test its authenticity. “People are uncomfortable with public displays of affection, a good tactic for a frumentarius.”

“Already grooming me for a job?”

“Perhaps, you show a skill for it.” She still paced and he decided to let her stew. “It was just a kiss Six, not marriage.”

“I KNOW! I know. It was just a surprise…” he placed his pack by the side of the bed and lay down. “Other side.” She commanded and he obeyed reluctantly, eyebrow raised in challenge. “I sleep that side, you're the guest so move your ass.”

He held his hands in mock surrender and submitted. He returned to his book as she opened her safe. He waited on baited breath to see if she would find anything out of order. He had taken great care to place everything how he had found it. The sound of the safe locking meant he was in the clear.

I wonder what she’ll write this time.

-----

What the mother loving hell!!!

Six scribbled furiously in her diary. She usually updated it every time she returned and had
meant to fill it in earlier but was distracted. Vulpes was occupied so it was a convenient time at least.

So diary, it's been a while. Well I found the Khans and found out who the man in the checkered suit was. I finally met my employer. I say met, does a giant screen with a picture on it count? He's either tucked away somewhere or a robot. Not quite sure which yet.

Lucky 38 is nice but hollow, I left the others there to hold the fort while I took an unexpected vacation. You remember the dog head guy? The one with the voice. Well I bumped into him again, one thing led to another, I ruined a dress, got slashed and spent an evening in his company. I can see why he is the one Caesar sends to meet the dissolute, he could charm a deathclaw into becoming his pet.

Well anyway, heads and tails of it is I've been travelling with him. Sorry “under his protection,” while we pay Caesar a visit. I wish I could say he's been anything but cordial but that would be a lie. But with regard to our previous dilemma the close proximity is not helping. Had a run in with Boone which we defused. Also having Vulpes nibble on your neck while talking is a severe distraction. I managed it so I might add that to the ‘shit I did right pile’. (The reason was we are currently pretending to be dating.)

Herein lies the trouble. To him it is a job. The man can change his whole demeanour at the drop of a hat. With Boones appearance he has been protective, how much for ensuring I don’t change my mind and how much is because he wants to piss off Boone. To think he was my first kiss… this is not going to help my dreams. It was… nice? Ah fuck it, it was more than nice it felt damn good, I can see what the fuss is about… well partially at least. Why did he have to be so good at it!!

Oh. Shit. He's looking, will have to lock you away now. Can't have him finding out and getting leverage. Unless… no he couldn't have cracked the safe...he wouldn’t...would he? Who am I kidding, he's probably tried.

Stay safe until I return...if I return.

“Think I'm going to go to sleep.” She announced, locking away her diary. “Can I turn off the light?”

“Of Course.”

“Goodnight.”

“Goodnight Six.”

-----

The diary didn't lie. He had everything he needed.

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“Welcome to Cottonwood Cove Six.”

“Love what you’ve done with the place.” She replied drily. Vulpes had seemed quite satisfied and smug since they left Novac. At least it had meant he hadn't needled Boone again. “The crucifixes
really add to the atmosphere.”

“Well, just as you spoke to me at Novac, it is my turn to warn you.”

“What?” She whined. “There's rules for this trip?”

“By Caesar’s grace isn't permission to do what you like. It's more guidance.”

“I'll listen.”

“Don't make jokes at Caesar’s expense, be respectful and keep your hands to yourself. When we arrive you’ll need to hand in your guns.”

“Well Mr. Obvious, that was all stuff I knew. Let's get cracking.” As they headed in she noted the coordinates into her pip-boy. Always handy to have a quick return point for the future, you never knew when you'd want to revisit.

“What's that you're doing?”

“Marking the cove on the map. The Pip-boy has a function that helps me track new places and get around quicker.”

“It still looks unnatural. Is it not heavy?”

“You get used to it, I once used it on a drunk who got too handsy and beat him to death with it.”

“I see...”

“When I first woke up it was a lifeline for keeping track. If I didn't have it for example, I'd have forgotten to tell the outpost about Nipton.”

“I'm still skeptical.” Vulpes returned the salute of a man who came to meet them from the main building.

“Vale, Vulpes still in one piece I see and with a fresh profligate whore in tow.”

“This is the Courier. Lord Caesar has been keen to meet with her and she is under his protection.” He replied as Six waved the medal at him.

“Then I will not stop the Frumentarii from their work.” He sneered.

----

“I take it you like him as little as I do.” Six whispered on the walk down to the barge. “One of Lanius’ men?”

“Yes, he leads the camp here, the largest this side of the river. He was actually being polite.”

“Fucking hell. Maybe Caesar should have sent you all the same memo.”

Vulpes had to agree, if only Caesar did then he wouldn't be concerned about what the men, more specifically Lanius’ men would be like on the other side of the River. Still Six seemed to be confident and not cowed by the prospect, but her open expressions had been brought under control. She was not going to make it easy.

“Cursor Lucullus if you would.” He stepped in first and helped Six into the boat.
“Why bother helping her, women are physically and intellectually inferior to men. Their role is to bear children and ensure the survival of our species.”

“What does that have to with bothering with me?” Six asked and he inwardly groaned. Was this a trial sent by Mars. Don't let him answer, don't let him answer...

“With such an inferior being why bother showing kindness. Women are only good on their backs ready for breeding so why bother treating them as anything less than cattle.”

Six sat silent and still an eerie calm running through her like barely controlled violence. She turned slowly in the bench to watch him. He supposed it was something akin to fear or guilt that speared through him.

“You know the thing we talked about on the hill.” He nodded. “Does it apply to him?”

Well…shit.

After a considering his options he shook his head. Her smile sent a shiver down his spine.
The Fort

Chapter Notes

Apologies, I realised late that not all of the text was copying over how it was formatted particularly parts that were in bold. I've gone back and corrected.

Today they reach Cottonwood Cove and we meet a new friend!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“What happened to the Cursor?” Asked the young Legionary who took the rope from Six’s waiting hand.

“Lakelurk surprised us around the bend and dragged him down. I think we got the 'lurk but we were a little late for the Cursor.”

“Should we send a search party?” The young man asked Vulpes who was keeping decidedly quiet.

“No. There is nothing left that can be done. Who is his second?”

“Well...I am Sir.”

“Congratulations, you’ve just been promoted.”

-----

Vulpes did not like this at all. Cursor Lucullus was good at his job and a loyal Legionary, it was a shame he had the die. But between the Courier and the Cursor, she was more valuable and so he said nothing when the Courier pounced. The other man's silent wide eyed plea for aid still played on his mind. Instead he watched impassively as the Courier had laughed snapping his neck.

“Come on man. Show this weak woman how it is done? Beat me and live. Come on. Come on!”
She had laughed feral with rage.

It was terrifying.

It was majestic.

She was stunning.

He needed her as a Frumentarius.

------

“Thank you.” She mumbled once they were out of earshot. The dusty road to the fort felt like the endless desert itself and each step felt like she was disappearing off of the face of the earth. *Show no fear. They need you far more than I need them.* At the gate Vulpes asked her to submit her weapons, all of them. He even retrieved the one hidden in her shirt. *Asshole.*

The camp was well organised and laid out in a manner that reflected the aged diagrams in her book. The Legionaries were near the entrance, a good buffer of bodies should anyone breach the walls and motivation for the men to defend themselves. There was a training ground towards the based of the hill and what looked like a crudely made fighting cage. At the top of the hill stood the least threadbare tents of the lot. That she supposed was Caesar, only the best for him she guessed.

“Where are the Frumentarii? You said you were separate.”

“Yes, we are further down the back the other side of the hill.”

“Close to the training grounds and the back wall. Easy for slipping in and out?”

“Exactly.”

“So who stays in the big tent?”

“Just Caesar, who is watched over by his praetorian guard day and night. It is also the main throne room and war council.”
“Fancy, if vulnerable.”

“How so?”

“Mini Nuke shot from one of the neighbouring hills. I could easily wipe out you all with one shot.”

“Mini-Nuke?”

“Not seen one?”

“No?”

She grinned wickedly. “I have a few, next time we find a raider nest I’ll show you how it works...a death machine at it’s finest.”

“Hmmmmmm. Remind me to place some scouts on the high ground.” They climbed the rest of the hill in silence, Six feeling all eyes upon her. Vulpes paused outside the tent, his shoulders were tense, she could tell he was reticent of what might happen. “Please, a moment. I will announce you to Caesar.” He ducked into the tent and she waited exchanging sideways looks at the guards who sneered. “Please, come in.”

The interior of the tent was not what she expected. Unlike the dusty and ramshackle exterior, the interior was well organised. The tents formed a ring which contained tables and cooking equipment, an ideal command post. Caesar every the melodramatic dictator sat upon his throne, in his kingdom of dirt and surveyed her with a masked disdain, he clearly did not like relying on a scraggly mailwoman. Vulpes stood to Caesar’s left while another man stood on his right. Both wore superior armour so the unknown man must be someone of a high rank.

“So I finally get to meet the Courier who has accomplished so much in such little time.” She could already tell he liked the sound of his voice. “I mean a man almost kills you, and your response was to track him across the breadth of the Mojave.”

“What can I say, I didn’t have anything else to do, and idle hands make the devils work.” she replied, Caesars face slipping in its neutrality. He was amused but she doubted his patience would last long. “Besides. I owe him a hole in the head.”
“How focused you are.”

“May I ask what the Legion would like with me? I received your mark, but I did not think I would be summoned.”

“I believe that we have a goal in common. To see the NCR out of these lands and stability and prosperity brought forth.”

“And the expansion of your borders.” she added.

“Indeed. Still you have seen the order brought to the land I already dominate, compare that to your NCR and how they sit on their hands while one of their towns is infested with powder ganger scum.”

“They’re not my NCR.”

“I’m surprised, Vulpes tells me the NCR consider you a friend.”

“And I consider them a paycheck. Nothing more. They care too much for themselves and not for the Mojave.”

“And so we are the answer to cleanse this land of them and bring honour and civilisation to the masses.”

“I doubt Mr. House would like that.”

“The elusive Lord of the strip. How does he fare?”

“Rather grumpily I must say. He certainly is not fond of you - and I quote - ‘interlopers.’ in his desert” she noted Caesar’s frown.
“I cannot decide if your honesty is a sign of courage or a idiotic act of suicide.”

“You said it yourself, I came back from the dead, and I don’t mean to squander it. However, Vulpes would not have let you near if you were a threat. I swore to him on my life that I mean you no harm unless you wish it to me. I have no love for House or the NCR they are in it for themselves. But… despite the stories regarding your war party I have hope you may be different. Therefore I have no intention of killing you. But I thought you deserved to know that the Strip has a price for your head, on top of the NCR’s bounty.”

“How refreshingly blunt for a player in this game.” smirked the mighty leader.

“Well I’ve been told it was rigged from the start.”

“There is a bunker within the fort, old world electronics and small slot about the size of a poker chip near the control panel. Has House mentioned this?”

“Not in detail, just that I should ‘eliminate the usurper squatting on it.’ As for the chip sized slot. I had one, a platinum chip that was the reason I was shot, I’d reason that’s what it is. I’ve not yet managed to pinpoint Benny. I think he’s laid low at the Tops but he hasn’t stuck his neck out yet for me to wring it.”

“Then this is my first command. Follow it well and I see a great alliance between us Courier. With great benefit for both of us. Retrieve the chip from Benny and we shall see if you live up to your legend.”

“As you wish.” she replied.

“I await your return Courier. Vulpes, see to it she has what she needs.”

-----

The Courier obediently followed a few footsteps behind him. He silently thanked the gods he made her take the knife out of her shirt as it had made the process much smoother. He was pretty sure he could have defeated her in hand to hand combat but there was no sense in tempting fate.
“If you would follow me.” he led her out in the late afternoon sun and headed down the opposite side of the hill towards his encampment. There were noticeably fewer tents with a central smaller open area. Everything faced towards three larger tents like Caesar’s, his personal tent, the communications hub and the briefing room. “Welcome to the Frumentarii camp. Do not touch, steal or damage it.”

“It’s nice.” she replied giving him the thumbs up. Oh how he wanted to...no. He was Vulpes, he didn’t get irritated.

“Come into my tent.”

“Oh? I didn’t reali-”

“Just get in.”

“A-OK”

He opened the tent flap and stepped inside and she quickly followed. A cursory check of his traps showed no-one had been inside. At least his men did their jobs properly. The Courier stood at the edge of the carpet in his tent, unsure where to stand. His personal tent was tidy and relatively impersonal. There was a desk with an oil lamp and his filing cabinet was beside it. A small table stood in the centre and his metal framed bed he had made a captive drag across the desert stood near the back wall. He had a simple trunk and wardrobe that held all his equipment and a cobbled together terminal on a separate desk. It was currently unplugged to prevent it setting itself on fire...again.

“Come in.” he gestured taking a seat at the table. “We need to talk.”

“Why do I feel like I’m on the naughty step?”

“Not yet at least. How do you intend to get the chip?”

“Benny is the leader of the Chairman’s who are located at the Tops. If he’s anywhere it’s there. I’ve got enough evidence of Benny’s betrayal so either I encourage a coup or I dunno flirt with him and gut him when we’re alone I suppose. I think I’ve got another red dress.”
Vulpes pondered her plan. A coup would be the most logical plan. The idea of Benny touching her in the red dress was unsettling.

“The coup is a safer option, but remember new leaders often like to tie up loose ends.”

“Duly noted. Do you know much about the Tops?”

“Beyond the layout at the structure? No, I deemed them not the biggest threat as they are just a bunch of raiders in suits. The Ultra-Luxe and Gomorrah were of a bigger concern. Cannibals and drug peddlers the lot of them.”

“Well we’ve killed off most of the cannibals. They should be like putty from now on.”

“Except for their leader, Moriarty.”

“In due time. I suppose I should be getting back, are you coming?”

“No. I must co-ordinate from here. However, should require aid or my counsel seek Alerio at Vault 21 he will be your support.”

“Thank you,”

“Wait here.” he rose from the table, and left the tent seeking one of his lieutenants from the command post. “Maximus.” he called. A tall, broad Frumentarius jogged over, usual grin plastered over his face, like an eager puppy. He supposed it was something that endeared him to the profligate women.

“Salve Vulpes, good to see you alive.”

“And you with your head still attached.” he chuckled. “Please fetch the Courier’s belongings from the gate and bring them to my tent.”
“Sir.” Maximus nodded jogging towards the gate.

Vulpes returned with water for his guest who was no longer at the table but by a small bookcase he kept. She was focused intently on the covers and didn’t hear him enter.

“See anything you like?” she yelped in surprise spinning around.

“Yes. It’s a good collection, mostly manuals or books in latin. I’m not very fluent though.”

“Hmmm.” he mused and she still remained tense. “a colleague is bringing your belongings.”

“What about my knife? A certain someone confiscated it.”

“You mean this little paper knife?”

“Please let’s not make this about size, it’s how you use it.”

“BWAAHAHA she’s cheeky Vulpes.”

-----

He must be part-bear. Or at least part-bear, part-supermutant. Whatever his heritage the man was tall and muscular, it was as if his Legion armour could barely contain him. Welds and extra tape indicated it had been extended to fit. Thank god or he’d be flashing half the fucking camp. _Was all of him that big?_ Even Vulpes who was taller than average seemed small compared to him. “Uhhhhhh” it was too much to take in at once.

“In my experience Courier, size does help.”

“Says the bear man.” she blurted.

“On my mother’s side.” he winked.
“How the fuck is he a Frumentarii?” she asked Vulpes almost as an accusation.

“I don’t understand, there’s a type?” replied Vulpes obstinately. “As compared to whom?”

“You, he’s nothing like you. I thought you were like what they aspired to be.”

“I’m flattered, but not everyone responds well to my charms.”

“Only if they were dead.” she mumbled to herself, but his grin meant he had heard.

“Frumentarii must be adaptable. Profligates are attracted to me for the mystery and my voice.” he purred. “Others prefer someone jolly and loveable like a big puppy. That is Maximus. If we are to infiltrate and gain the trust of others we must be as adaptable and varied as them.”

“Puppy?”

“Yup.” smiled Maximus, “On account of my eyes and sense of humour… and I really like fucking a woman on her knees.” he chuckled. “You look good when you blush.”

“Ok big guy, ease it back.” she held her hands in submission. “That predatory sense definitely belongs to a Frumentarii. I’m sorry for doubting you.”

“Here’s your things.” Maximus handed over her backpack. Six swiftly checked over the contents and stored the switchblade in one of the pockets. The familiar weight on her shoulders was reassuring. The backpack held everything she owned and her future paycheck.

“Thanks. Is there anything else you need me to look in while in town?” she asked Vulpes who thought carefully for a moment. She could feel Maximus’ eyes rake over her body, it was not as pleasant as Vulpes.

“I have an informant residing at Vault 21, Alerio cannot intervene due to him being made. The Omertas are threatening my informant, perhaps you could pay them a visit.”
“Will do, what’s her name?”

“Martine Groesbeck.”

“On it.” she typed the details onto her pip-boy and made sure to add the coordinates to the Frumentarii camp, there was no reason to keep going through the gate. “All right, I wish you both well but I’d like to get back before dark.”

“It’s a long walk Courier.”

“Not for me.” she stepped outside Vulpes tent, the two men following her out of curiosity. “See you soon.” she winked, and teleported in a shimmer of light. The last thing she saw was the look of shock on Vulpes face.

Perfect.

Chapter End Notes

I hope you enjoyed this chapter, report writing is a pain in the arse so it's been slower this week.
Welcome to Maximus who will be reappearing, I hope you like him.
The Courier Comes Full Circle

Chapter Notes

Second chapter of the weekend! This time one wholly as the Courier POV in snippets. She learns some horrible truths.

(Also I'm getting the hang of editing the format of AO3 compared to my Google Doc.)

Have a lovely week everyone! Next bit is in progress.

Six rematerialised just outside the strip. The securitrons were used to her appearing out of thin air and hardly flinched now. The gate creaked in the same way it did when she left and somehow where the rest of the world had changed some things stayed the same. She heard Victor’s rattling before she looked up from her pip-boy.

“Well Howdy partner! It’s good to see you! The ol’ boss man is keen to talk to you.”

“Fine.” she sighed, knowing there was no escaping House.

----

“Well, well you finally return. I presume the interlopers have been dealt with.” the impassive face flickered on the screen.

“In a manner of speaking, I’ve gotten the lay of the land and can begin forming a strategy. Just shooting it with a mini-nuke is not going to work out for us.”

“Pity, get back to it then. Chop chop! Don’t forget I don’t pay you for holidays.”

“Will do boss.”

Back in the presidential suite, Six dropped her heavy pack and sorted through her accumulated crap. Guns, Ammo, Armour and ‘misc’, each neatly organised into piles. Then methodically she stripped down duplicates and improved what she had, hoping it would get a better price. Job done she headed into the bathroom, the towels she had placed over the cameras still in place. Stripping off, she relished the feel of the warm water on her skin and scents that cleaned deeply. Leaving her clothes where they fell she wrapped herself in a towel and returned to her room the silk nightgown felt like heaven against her skin and on the soft spring mattress she passed into a dreamless sleep.

----

The next day she made a brief trek to Mick and Ralphs before heading to the Tops. She wore simple mercenary armour and carried That Gun and her stiletto. She didn’t want to scare Swank showing up armed to the teeth. The Tops was already busy with gamblers who probably hadn't left in days. Something to do with the casino not having any windows she had read once. She checked in her gun but kept the knife cleverly hidden away.
She approached the reception desk, Swank sat in his usual spot, cigarette hanging out of his mouth.

“Hey Swank, how’s shakes?”

“Courier Six, all the better for seeing you doll.”

“Benny in yet? Thought I’d get my daily question over and done with.”

“He ain’t babyface.”

“Well good, cause this time I want you. You ever wonder why I keep asking for him?”

“I gotta say I have been getting a little curious.”

“He’s the one who shot me. Gotta give a girl a chance at revenge.”

“You got any proof of that kid?”

“Yup.” she handed him the lighter, the note and cigarette butt.

“Damn kid, ain’t that a kick in the head? ‘Ol Benny’s been up to no good. What you proposing?”

“Let me meet him alone, I’ll finish him off and then everything is yours.”

“He’s in his suite right now, Hide at the bar, I’ll get someone to bring him down. Can’t have some Cat ruin the good thing we got here even if it’s the Ben-man.”

“Great. I’ll be at the bar.”

-----

“Hi Benny.”

“What in the goddamn..?”

“Miss me?”

“Let’s keep this in the groove, ok? Smooth moves, like smooth little babies.” Six was surprised, she relived that night at the grave in her dreams repeatedly, he always seemed so threatening and powerful. But even here surrounded by his bodyguards in his stronghold he looked weak and frightened. Where was the monster of her dreams?

“Seems like you need to work on your marksmanship”

“I hit what I was aiming for. Guess you had brains to spare. Or are you just thick skulled? Either way baby at least I can sleep at night, knowing you didn’t die. What say you and I cash out and go somewhere private like? Any questions you go I can answer.”

“Where did you have in mind?”

“I’ll comp you to the Presidential suite. Give you a taste of a better lifestyle. I’ll stay down here, like normal then follow you up.”

“How about we both go to the suite together and lose the bodyguards. I checked my gun in at the desk so there’s no danger.”
“If that’s what it takes to win your trust, then lead the way.”

The presidential suite was similar to the Lucky 38 except it was spread out over two floors. The main ground floor held two billiard tables and a bar. If she was honest it was too garish, the Lucky 38 at least meant that she didn’t have to go upstairs. Benny took a seat at the bar and poured himself a measure of whiskey knocking it back quickly.

“Now that you and me got some privacy. You mind telling me how is it that you’re still living?”

“A securitron in Goodsprings called Victor found me while taking a walk. He dug me up and took me to the doctor who pulled me together. But everything before that moment where you shot me was lost to the wind.”

“House was onto me from the word Go? I thought I was being so clever… once you were vertical how’d you track me down?”

“I searched for a man in a checkered suit. Between Novac, the Khans and good old persistence I followed a trail across the desert.”

“Persistent that is one way of putting it.” he sighed pouring another drink, Six quietly retrieved her knife from it’s hiding place. “I suppose that’s enough of first base. Tell me how is the wind gonna blow?”

“I’m wondering what is stopping me from killing you.”

“You’ve got the crazy drop on me here, baby, that’s for sure. If you were gonna kill me now is as good a time as any.” he visibly stiffened hand moving from the bottle. It was now or never. “But baby - if you did I’d be disappointed. You went to all this trouble to arrange this shin-dig so there must be something you want?”

“Not gonna lie, my main desire is seeing if you’re blood matches the shade of the carpet.”

“Then this is endsville, baby - let the best man win.”

Six ducked as Benny threw his whiskey glass towards her, his hand dipping under his jacket presumably for a gun. Six ran towards the bar, the heavy wood more cover than the billiard tables. She grabbed a bottle from the bar and swung it causing Benny to back off but there was indeed a gun in his hand. She swung once more and caught Benny around the head stunning the Chairman and sending him scrabbling. Six ducked as he shot blindly to ward her off, she ducked behind the billiard table and grabbed one of the sticks.

Three more shots rang out before she risked sticking her head out and threw the bottle.

“That was a vintage!” she heard him snap.

Undaunted she held the dagger in her left and the stick in her right. As Benny rounded the corner she jabbed the stick like a spear and used it to bat away his shooting hand. When she got enough space between them she lurched forward and headbutted him. Yanking at the gun in his hand. He retorted with a punch in the gut, she doubled over and he brought the butt of the gun between her shoulder blades. Six rolled under the Billiard table buying her a few precious seconds as he rounded the table and she jumped at him knife in hand and knocking them both to the ground. She sat atop him as she clasped the blade in both hands using her whole body weight to drive it down as he held her back.

“Come on baby.” she mocked. “Don’t you wanna get acquainted with me? I’ll bury you all purty
“Fucking bitch.” he snarled and tried to buck her off. In response she slammed her fist on the blade driving it down, each impact caused the blade to dip further. “No!” he hissed before her final hit and tip of the blade pierced his throat. He yelled and let her go and she drove the blade home. He made a pathetic gurgle as he began to choke on his own blood.

Six stood and staggered exhausted around the room, till she found what she wanted. Checking the magazine she headed over. There was still enough anger in him that his eyes burned with rage as she stood over him.

“How the fuck did Benny get a securitron in his walls?? How had anyone else not noticed??

“Hey! Hi there! So good to see you! What can I do for you today?”

What the actual fuck?

“Did you get the Platinum chip?”

“Yes Mr. House.”

“Good, take the lift down, I need to show you something.”

Six sat curled up in the bathtub the soft patter of warm water from the shower acting like a blanket. Gatling lasers and rocket launchers. **Dear Lord.** House had taken her into the basement to finally learn what all the fuss was about and why she had been killed. House would have power over everything, though if the eerily cheery yes man was to be believed he wasn’t the only one.

**Shit, shit, shit. What do I do?**
She ached to just walk off into the sunset, like the posters that dotted the strip, let go of the responsibility. But the thought of those machines running rampant in the desert all the way to Goodsprings. She threw up again in the bath. Take control, run away or leave it to someone else? She was just a fucking mailman! She was never meant to hold the lives of everyone in her hands. For the first time she cried, ugly and hard and the pain flowed from her. Pain and suffering she had bottled from every wound, every bullet hole and every moment stolen from her memory. Her chest felt too tight and her skin too small. *Help me....*

-----

“This ain’t your business. Walk off and forget you saw anything.”

Six rolled her eyes, dickheads were still dickheads. A woman in a sheer nightgown cowered against the doorway to the bathroom.

“The Legion is watching out for this woman. Go ahead. Go against them. I dare you.” she replied coldly.

“Shit, we were just following orders, I need to talk to the boss.”

“Trot on fellas, don’t give me a reason to follow.” the woman visibly relaxed.

“Thank you so much they were going to kill me.”

“Why were they after you?” Six questioned.

“I may sometimes go into Gomorrah and feed the NCR some of the things I hear.”

*What a clever fox he is...Vulpes!*

“Take care of yourself Martina.” without waiting for a reply she left and headed for the room Alerio was supposedly in. She banged on the metal door, a bright eyed man who looked eerily similar to Vulpes opened the door gun drawn. “Salve Alerio.” the man nodded and allowed her in. He turned on the lamps and poured some coffee leaning against the counter in his sleepwear.

“What brings you this late Courier. Are you alright?”

Six held onto the mental tape that held everything together and tugged it tighter.

“Can you send Vulpes a message? I’m on my way back. Please don’t stab me.”

“Understood.”

Six waited till the message had been sent and headed out into the open air. The bright lights of the strip did their best to blot out the stars, but she could still see a few as she breathed deeply, the cracks already opening again. Maybe he could help or at least distract her.

Six vanished again.

----

“Six, I didn’t expect to see you so soon.” Vulpes stood outside the communication tent, his armour missing. He was clearly not prepared for visitors. “Are you alright?”

“I...I… can we talk in your tent. Please?” Vulpes studied for a minute before letting her walk ahead into his tent. She paced slowly unsure what she wanted next.
“Six? What’s wrong?” he asked again, “Stop. Stop.” he held onto her arms so she would stop pacing. She wanted to look at him, but was afraid she would shatter. She leant into his touch like a beacon in dark as he cupped her cheek trying to encourage her to look at him. She hadn’t realised she was even crying.

“Please…” she began. “Please can I stay with you tonight? I’m scared to be by myself right now.”

“Surely one of your companions would be better? Wouldn’t you be comfortable with them?”

“They aren’t there anymore. They left on their own business and haven’t come back.”

“I don’t think fraternising…”

“You dog!” she giggled weakly through tears, playfully slapping him on the shoulder. “I meant sleep, not sexy times.”

“Good, because crying women don’t work for me. But what is the cause of this?”

“I promise, I’ll explain it all tomorrow, but now. I just…”

“Alright, Alright.”

“Thank you.” she dumped her bag and shed the trousers she wore over her sleeping shorts and her overshirt. Vulpes muttered to himself as he put out the lamps and stripped off his tunic. Six climbed onto the bed so that she was closest to the tent wall and rolled on her side so he would have room to sleep. She felt the bed dip behind her as he climbed in and he kept his word to not touch her. She felt a sense of peace begin to fill the empty void.

“Sleep well, Vulpes.”

“You too Six.”

That night she dreamed.
Nightmares

Chapter Notes

Whew! A frantic week getting reports done (with a major rewrite) so a little slower this week.

Six dreams and the unlikeliest person brings some comfort.

Enjoy!

Dark, dark. It was so very dark. Why couldn’t she see?

Then there were voices, giggling, sneering taunting.

Hands pinched and gouged her skin, a hand around her throat.

The pain, blinding, searing pain that burrowed through her skull like a worm gnawing at her mind. She could feel it consume her as she shrank and drained away.

Help me! Help me! I don’t want this!

She reached out with her mind to the unseen hands but they let her fall. Her friends let her fall.

The abyss grew closer, the darkness hungrier. A chasm opening ready to swallow her whole. She screamed as she felt like she was being torn in two...

“SIX!”

A voice in the darkness. A hand outstretched.

“WAKE UP!”

Save me...Help me... Catch me...

Six woke screaming hands held her down and she fought and struggled. The dark wouldn’t have her! She could climb!

“OPEN YOUR EYES.”

She knew that voice.

“Vulpes?”

“Praise Mars. You’re awake.” he sighed releasing her immediately. “What happened? You were screaming.”

“A nightmare, I get them sometimes. This was worse.”
“Stay there.” he ordered walking across the room, the dull light of a low lamp illuminated his outline and highlighted Vulpes as he brought it back. “You’ve scratched yourself raw.” he placed the lamp and went to get a wet cloth.

“I’m sorry.” she choked a sob. He would leave like the others, they all hated her nightmares. ”I’m sorry.” she tried to get up but he gently pressed her down by the shoulders, she could have easily pushed him away.

“Stay there.” he said more firmly beginning to gently clean her scratches. “And stop apologising, I’m not angry.”

“But…”

“We all have nightmares. It doesn’t mean anything.”

“Thank you.”

“But, whatever is going on, I’d like you to tell me about it in the morning.” he wiped the cuts around her neck and arms the water cooling her heated skin.

“Yes Vulpes.”

Placing the cloth back in his washbasin he returned to bed Six has left plenty of space. He left the light on this time, rolling on his side to face the lamp. Six lay facing the ceiling, but soon rolled to face his back. Perhaps being reminded he was there would help? Vulpes breathing had evened out, apparently he wasn’t afraid she’d do it again, nor was he disturbed by it. Then again he did do that lottery... she supposed. She lay there a while tracing the muscles on his back with her eyes like a map, following the same path, the same speed. It calmed her as she gained a rhythm and despite fighting against her fatigue she fell asleep.

-------

Vulpes woke to find the room warmer than when he went to sleep. Something heavy pressed against his back. He groped blindly for what was trapping him and felt the slender wrist and arm of the Courier. In the night she had wrapped around him and was pressed against his back. She was sleeping soundly now, the panic from the night dissipated. Gingerly he unhooked himself from her grasp and rose from bed, his body used to the routine. He silently padded to the table in the centre of the room and poured himself some water and watched Six sleep. Her face was so peaceful compared to the night before, angry red marks still stood bold against her skin. But it was like all the tension had left her body and she looked … like Venus herself. Soft cheeks and full lips, though not overly pouty. She was even more beautiful than in the Ultra-Luxe. Six was deep asleep almost like the dead, so he dressed in his tunic and went to collect his usual rations and some extra for his guest. As he passed the larger tent of his lieutenant he nudged Maximus awake.

“I need you this morning. Get paper and come to my tent.” he ordered, his friend rubbing the sleep from his eyes and giving him the thumbs up. “And make no joke of what you see.”
Maximus cocked his head in silent question, but Vulpes ignored him. He knew his friend would tease him regardless, but Six was not herself. He wanted this kept as simple as possible.

Two bowls of rare fresh batch porridge later, he carried their meals back to his tent. Maximus had clearly vacated his tent and Vulpes could only assume he was inside. Pushing the flap aside he stepped in finding Maximus standing over the prone Courier.

“You dog! I knew she wasn’t just an informant. Tell me is she as delicious as she looks? You scoundrel!”

“She came here last night in a panic and afraid. I only gave her shelter.”

“Shelter” Maximus emphasised with air quotes. “And you brought me in to watch the fallout, and you even got snacks.”

“Get your own food.” Vulpes growled holding onto the bowls. If he let them out of his sight it was highly likely both would be scoffed. “And I need you as a second set of ears on this.”

“Right oh, I best get some porridge then. What’s the flavour this time? Paste? Or my favourite reheated lunch?”

“Fresh.” Maximus didn’t even wait to be dismissed before he was running for the mess tent. Vulpes placed the bowls on the table and knelt by the bed he gently Pinched the Courier’s earlobe to try and wake her. She moaned and rolled to her back still unmoving. “Six.” he stroked the side of her cheek and she leaned to his touch. Her eyes opened slowly taking in her surroundings. “I got breakfast.”

Six groaned but slowly roused herself. She moved as if every muscle in her body was stiff or ached. She looked rather defenseless compared to woman he knew from their travels. Her mental shields were still not in place. He sat at the table not wanting to seem like he cared or he was some doting nanny; that was not the case at all. While the porridge was still warm he dug into breakfast leaving her bowl in the space available. She staggered dragging her feet, he noted that morning were probably the best time to kill her judging by how sluggish she was.

“What is it?” she mumbled sniffing the bowl suspiciously.
“Remember the porridge we talked about?”

“Yeah?”

“Chef’s Special - that means it is fresh!” he tried to sound optimistic.

“Dear Lord, I might have gotten a slave.” she groaned after the first bite. “I see why you visit New Vegas so much.” he chuckled at her joke noticing a shadow in the doorway.

“Did you just...did he just…laugh?”

“Maximus, good to see you.” greeted the Courier through bites. “God not more porridge? How can you eat two bowls.”

“My Mama always said I was a growing boy.” he replied between bites. “Besides I’m tall and burly and he works me too hard.”

Six laughed again, Vulpes recognised the weakness in it, it was a little less jovial, yet he preferred it to the melancholy. Six returned her focus to the bowl as if every spoonful needed her full concentration. Maximus raised his eyebrows asking a silent question and Vulpes just shrugged and gestured he should ask.

“So...Courier…” Maximus weighed up how to approach. “What’s going on sweet thing?”

Six snorted into her porridge. “I am not sweet... at least I don’t think so.” she stared off into the distance as if trying to remember something then shrugged and carried on. Maximus and Vulpes exchanged more silent looks and gestures till it was negotiated Vulpes would try.

“You are kind, Courier, but sweet? I’d say the man you choked to death wouldn’t agree.” she smiled weakly again at his response but still she was quiet. “What happened?” he stated, rather than questioned, perhaps a firm approach would work.

Six took a deep breath and leaned back against the chair watching them warily, her body tense more out of fear than anger. She watched them closely for a reaction but both remained calmly
neutral. She breathed out, her shoulders sagging as if she was being crushed by a tremendous weight.

“I take it he’s here as witness.” she pointed at Maximus. He nodded. “Whatever I tell you here, is… going to have an impact on the Legion. However I can’t tell Caesar, not with the others there. I...I...trust you Vulpes and I think you need to know.”

“I will inform Caesar if it is pertinent.”

“Please do.”

“Mind if I take notes?” asked Maximus.

“Whatever.”

Six pulled her chair across from Vulpes, with the table between them it felt like an interrogation rather than friends and allies at the table. Yet Six didn’t display the hostility of a suspect nor the silence of a reluctant speaker. She was just empty.

“Where to start, where to start.” she drank some water. “I got the platinum chip back.”

“How?”

“Swank gave me permission to kill Benny. The evidence and some sweet talk convinced him. I lured Benny to a suite and we fought. He tried to buy me off, get me to work with him to overthrow you both. As if I could trust a guy who killed me.” she snorted rubbing her eyes, her eyes were shinier; she was definitely unstable. “Well I killed him, it was ironic, really. Shot him in the head with the gun that shot me, well I suppose as he choked on the knife in his throat he didn’t find it ironic.” she drank some more and they gave her the space to respond. “After House called me into his office. I’ve still never met him face to face. He is basically one large computer screen, just an unmoving face with a fucking securitron woman who he ‘interacts’ with. I have yet to see a body.”

“That’s an abomination.” hissed Maximus.

“That’s not the worst part.” she replied. “He sent me down into the basement to a testing facility. He showed me the next step in his plan. It’s… Well, you know the securitrons now are pretty formidable? Imagine the same except they are tougher, have laser pistols and rocket launchers. Every single securitron in the desert has this capability and the chip activates it and securitrons only answer to House.”

Vulpes felt sick. Regardless of his intelligence gathering and tactics, House still had the
advantage. The Legion hated modern technology as a principal but the thought of that much high powered ordinance, they’d slice through the infantry like butter. If they couldn’t be disabled then there was no way they could ever push further north.

“Worst thing is.” she continued. “That bunker you want me to go into, is House’s main manufacturing plant and he’s pissed you’re all camping on top of it. As much as a machine can be angry.” her bitter smile dropped. “He will use it to keep things the way they are in this… facsimile of the past. God, what if he finally decided to purge Freeside?”

“Thank you Courier, for telling us. This is vital intelligence and you will need to carry out Caesar’s task in the bunker swiftly.”

“Vulpes, House has asked me to kill Caesar.” both men stilled. She measured her next words, but he was ready to strike if he needed, but her tears caught him unprepared. “I don’t know what to do...I’m not a leader, I’m a mailman with a few extra holes.” she sniffed pointing at where he presumed her scar was. “All three of you are both good and bad for us, but this choice shouldn’t be mine alone. I don’t know what to do, what if I pick wrong?”

“Then you live with the consequences.” he stated simply, there was no sugar coating an outcome. “Or try a bigger bullet.”

“Would you have me?” she asked. “Is there a place for me here without being a slave?”

“I cannot speak for Caesar, he is the one to ask about your role. But, to choose us would be wise. We can bring order and change to the desert.”

“Then I suppose I should blow up that bunker.” she sighed heaving to her feet. “Vulpes, could I ask for your help in killing House? It’s the only way to protect Caesar. If I won’t do it then someone else will.”

“I know, I will increase his security and if I am able to help, yes.”

Six went to her pack checking the contents between general mumbling to herself. Maximus came to his side clearly bursting with questions.

“Go and speak to Caesar and arrange a meeting. I need to speak to her alone.” Maximus knew better than to argue and left quietly. “Six.” he asked seeking her attention, but she didn’t stop. “Six.” he repeated more firmly, he didn’t want to touch her, she was tense already.

“What?”

“Why did you arrive last night?” she turned slowly to face him and was surprised Maximus wasn’t there. “You failed to explain. I assumed because of company.”

“I...it’s... I don’t know...weakness? Embarrassing? There’s no-one else I can trust except the spy who uses secrets and should be untrustworthy.”

“Only to my enemies. You have my friendship and with that an implied level of trust.”

“I finally found out why I died, why I lost a piece of who I am.” she sighed sitting on the edge of on the table next to him. “All I saw during his demonstration were death machines and that everything, everything I was doing and trying to is just pointless. As Benny said the game was rigged from the start. That chip was the only thing that mattered. I’d find it, hand it in and get
revenge and then I’d be free. I didn’t want more than that. I didn’t want to be greedy or ambitious. Yet here I am with the fate of the desert tucked in my bra. I’m not a leader. I am good at what I do which is shoot things and sneak about but not much else. I just felt overwhelmed at what lay before me. I was scared and afraid I’d do something I’d regret.”

“Where are your companions?”

“Different hotels or Novac.”

“Why are they not at your side then? You clearly need the aid.”

“They...um...disapprove of this,” she waved between them. “But mainly they’re absent because of the nightmares. Like you experienced last night. Truth is my friends tried for a bit to help, but when it got too much, they stopped or complained that I should be doing something to fix myself even when I had tried. So I went my own way and they theirs. You’re the first to not be angry or upset.”

“We all have ghosts we carry. You’re not the first to have nightmares and won’t be the last.”

“Still, thank you...I wanted to run and hide or...worse. There was no-one I could turn to or rely on and I felt like I was being swallowed up. It brought back being in the grave and knowing I couldn't stop him. Knowing I was going to die and no-one would ever notice I was gone. I guess that's why I had the dream again.”

“Why do you claw yourself?”

“I can't be sure but there is a part where I feel I’m going grabbed and clawed in the dark. Maybe my body reacts.”

“And your friends fled.”

“They didn't know how to stop it or calm me. I’d wake up afraid and fight or lash out and scream. It was easier leave me asleep. It became easier to be alone; no-one to disturb. You were the first to try and stay. You made me safe; you made me feel less afraid.” She smiled weakly and so heartfelt yet filled with despair.

“Then should we travel together I will always help.” Why make a promise he may not be able to keep?

“Thank you” she sniffed. “I'm gonna cry for a minute behind the tent. Don't worry I'm just relieved. So, so relieved.”

“Then cry in here. Don't let others see you.”

“Yes Vulpes.” and she cried.

------

Vulpes had slinked off as soon as she began to cry; it probably made him uncomfortable. She sat on his bed curled into a ball and let the pain and fear wash through her system. She had been so afraid he’d leave her too. As stupid as it sounded she was enjoying their friendship and didn't want
that fragile thing to break. She heard the tent rustle and Maximus stepped in.

“Hey Sugar.”

“Not sugar.”

“Darling?”

“Nope”

“Vixen?”

“Nada.”

“Well what can I call you then? Courier is just a job description.”

“Six. You can call me Six.”

“Alright Six.” he purred.

“How do you even make that sound dirty?”

“It's a skill.”

Six snorted with laughter that became stronger till she was doubled over laughing. “You’re so ridiculous…” she chortled. Wiping away her tears with the side of her hand.

“Ridiculous? I'll have you know I had to be taught a sense of humour, not much of it in the Legion. Besides when it helps a beautiful lady I think of it as a gift.

“Such a dog!” She playfully slapped him. “Speaking of which, where’s Vulpes?”

“He is relaying your intel to Caesar. Hopefully the man won't have you executed.”

“Then I best give him something to keep me alive for. Please tell Vulpes I’ll be back soon. I’m going to the bunker.”

“Want back up? Gotta admit I’m curious as to what is down there.”

“No, I’ll be fine. Most likely. Probably. I think I have enough stimpacks.”

“I’m not feeling so confident about this…”

“I need this Maximus.”

“Max, it’ll be easier for you to shout later.”

“Down boy! I need to go Max and don’t make me spay you.”

“You keep promising punishments. I’m still waiting for you to deliver.”

“Soon Max.”

“Later Six.”
“This is very disturbing news Vulpes.” Caesar sat forward, hands steepled in front of him. Even Lucius shuffled nervously on the spot. Caesar had listened carefully to everything the Courier had shared, questioning where necessary. He was lucky Lanius was absent or it would have been a shouting match. “Can we trust her?”

“Yes, more so than ever. She is looking for a place to belong and feel wanted if we offer her that then she will remain loyal. If we alienate her now then she will be a wild card.”

“Then she lives for now. As for House...what do you suggest?”

“The Courier has suggested we kill him together. We could eliminate an enemy and get valuable intelligence at the same time. I can perhaps also use her with our Picus problem.”

“Surely we cannot risk such a bold move when we are not ready to take the dam?” Added Lucius.

“The longer he lives the greater the danger to Cae-”

Vulpes stopped as the ground began to shake violently for a few seconds before dying down. The sounds of the men shouting began to echo through the tent and general shouts from the direction the bunker. Caesar did not move from his throne and remained composed so Vulpes did the same. Lucius ordered his men to find out the cause.

Within minutes there was the thumping of boots and the sound of shouts. The guards pulled back the tent flap and in was dragged the Courier, arms gripped by separate men and she was matched in her pack and gear missing. She looked roughed up and distinctly beaten. The men threw her roughly to the ground by Caesar before kicking her roughly once more.

“Lord Caesar, this whore was found by the bunker when the large explosion occurred. She claimed she was working on your orders but refused to comply and know her place.” The soldier stated. Six had rocked back onto her knees so she sitting upright. She was bloody and looked back at him with fire in her eyes and licked her bloody lip.

“This profligate followed your order Lord Caesar. I retrieved the chip and destroyed the base.”

“Silence bitch.” Snarled her captor slapping her roughly. Vulpes could tell things were not going to end well for that man.

“Actually soldier you are the one who disrespected my guest.” Caesar remarked. “She bears my mark you shit brained ingrate and you went against my order.”

“What? I didn't know, I would never have…”

“Well you did...and now your life rests in her hands. Courier, what compensation would you seek?”

“Hurt him badly, but don't kill him.”

“You are lucky she is merciful.” Laughed Caesar. “But I am not. 20 lashes then strap him to a crucifix. I will not be disobeyed.”

The guard struggled against the praetorians as they dragged him out. Vulpes helped Six to her feet
but she was hurt quite badly and stumbled. She clutched her stomach but refused his help to stand upright. Vulpes wanted to tear the legionnaire apart for the damage he could have wrought to his hard work. He wanted the hands of every man who had hurt her. He would personally make them pay.

“You did well Courier. I am certainly pleased by your actions. I welcome you with open arms into the Legion should you wish it. I'm sure Vulpes would agree you have served our cause well.”

Six nodded in response.

“Rest your wounds, see Siri if you need to. As soon as you are healed I want you and Vulpes to kill House. Do this and the others will see your loyalty.”

“True to Caesar.” She repeated as she had heard Vulpes do. She bid her Lord goodbye and limped from the tent. Vulpes felt the raw urge to make the guard bleed, himself.

“Vulpes.”

“Yes Lord.”

“See to her care. She seems to hold you in high esteem.”

“True to Caesar.”

“Oh and Vulpes. Do whatever it takes to keep her loyal.”

----


Six walked tall, if at a slow and steady pace. She refused to act defeated in front of the army recruits. But the pain was beginning to make her mind fuzzy and her feet feel like lead. Max was stood by the command tent speaking with some other Frumentarii as he saw she approach, his surprise was written across his face. By the time he ran over she had reached the edge camp. Her steps were smaller. She was thirsty and for once she wished bullets weren’t so attracted to her face.

“Damn Six, you look beat. Let me carry you.”

“No.” She rasped. “Can't let them see.”

“You're back at the Frumentarii's camp. No one will see.”

“Just get me to his tent.” she bit out.

Six barely registered the shouts around her. Max barked orders and sent for water and medicine. She felt his hand on her back and heard him speak to her. She wasn’t sure if she was responding. She just needed to be alone and get her medicine in her system. She heard the rustle of fabric then the sounds of the camp seemed to fade away. Large hands caught her as she fell and scooped her into the air. A larger table replaced Vulpes usual dining table and she was sat on top of it. A glass of water was pressed against her lips as Max barked more orders. A familiar voice shouted into the tent. She hadn't heard Vulpes that angry before. Max moved away and she started to fall forward.
She gripped the edge of the table to steady herself and the dizziness returned.

“Bowl!” She shouted cupping a hand over her mouth. Hurried footsteps returned and a bucket thrust into her hands as she vomited. Vulpes stepped into the tent as she wiped her mouth everything ached when she breathed.

“Everyone except Maximus out. Keeps the water coming till told otherwise.” Snapped Vulpes. “Six?” Familiar hands cupped her cheeks encouraging her to look up, she whined against the pressure on her cuts. “What do you need me to do?”

“Dr. Vulpes.” She rasped out. “So good to see you.”

“My favourite patient.”

“I got her stuff.” Max announced and Vulpes began rifling through till he found her medical supplies.

“I don't...know the damage…”

“Clothes off then.”

“No dinner...first?”

“How about breakfast after?” Max added from behind her. “Fresh porridge with extra sludge.”

“Sounds gourmet.”

“Lean back on me.” Max responded easing her back. Vulpes began to undo her trousers and Max lifted her shirt. With some maneuvering and a lot of swearing she had lost her outer layer and was laid on the table.

“You've got a lot of bruising and some open wounds. What worries me is this nasty deep purple across your ribs. It's too dark and your stomach is swelling.”

“Internal bleeding. Ok. Stimpack number one and two goes in that area, disperse it at an equal distance.” She screamed but Max held her firm as Vulpes worked. “Open wounds now. Any deep?”

“Shoulder, thigh and back.”

“How many stimpacks left?”

“Five.”

“Share one between the three then. When they’ve stopped closing rub alcohol on the wound and bind it. Same for shallow cuts.” She cursed some more. “Maybe another stimpacks on the ribs.”

“Maximus get the water. We need to clean you off first.”

“Not him.” She whimpered. “I don't know him well enough to touch me.”

“Alright. What the hell did this?”

“Sentry bot.”

“A what?”
“Imagine a military built securitrons with stinger weapons and thick shielding. It took 3 emp
grenades, 2 grenades and a fuckton of shotgun shells. Then the bloody thing had the gall to
explode and slam me into some piping. The whole vault went nuts and I had to shoot my way out.
Protectatrons are easy, those fuckers you usually avoid.”

“How many times have I patched you up now?”

“I stopped counting after the first time. Did I tell you about my theory?”

“No?”

“I think the world is trying to finish what is started, hence everything is trying to kill me.”

“I don't think the world revolves around you Six.”

“Damn Vulpes, you can't let a girl dream can you?”

“I'm sorry. Oh no! How horrible, the world hates you! You poor thing. Let Vulpes make you feel
better.” he mocked.

“Ahhhhh you ruined it.”

----

Six was patched up and dozing on the table when Maximus nudged him to head outside. The sun
was beginning to set and heat breaking.

“What the hell happened?” Growled Maximus.

“After she came out of the bunker some of Lanius’s men challenged her reason for being there. I
don't know the exact cause but they beat on her. She didn't lift a finger in response.”

“Surely the guard at the bunker knew?”

“I would assume so.”

“But he did nothing.”

“Exactly so.”

“Shit.”

“But why is she back with us? Surely Caesar…”

“He believes she is easiest swayed by me and that she trusts me the most. You saw her. She didn't
go to the medicine tent she came here.” He sighed. “So as long as that is the case then she is
welcome here.”

“It's not just that is it though.”

“What do you mean?”

“Vulpes, you are the most serious and focused man I've met. Yet she made you chuckle. Twice!
I’ve almost fainted.”

“I admit I find her more tolerable than most profligates and she has proved herself useful on multiple occasions. But it is nothing more than that.”

“You dense motherfucker. You can seduce the pants off anyone but...gods save me.”

“I am not dense. She is just an ally.”

“I’ll remind you of that on your wedding day.”

“Asshole.”

Vulpes dismissed his friend and reassured the men on the events of the day. A messenger came to say the flogging was arranged for the following day and the Courier was expected to attend. He realised with horror he was leaving red marks everywhere and what the source of the blood had been. Returning to his tent he refilled the washbowl and began to scrub his skin free of her blood. Even with a rough cloth the dried blood was hard to shift, normally it would not bother him but for some reason the sight of hers made him want to scrub himself raw to get rid of every fleck. Three rinses it took to get rid of every drop, but he still felt it clinging. The thought of her dying, of more crimson spilt, sat ill in his gut. He admired her strength and resilience, she was both strong and fragile and yes, her intelligent wit made him laugh. Still...she was a profligate. Nothing more. Six whimpered on the table as she rolled to her back, yet she still slept soundly. Better to leave her where she lay then.

Vulpes worked on his terminal for a few hours, he had little appetite and much planning to do especially if they were going to help with the Picus problem. Six began to twist and writhe again on the table. He presumed she was having bad dreams again. He stepped to the table and whispered to her a reminder she was safe and here. He couldn’t resist a gentle touch of his hand against her cheek and she stilled, pain easing away. All she wanted was a place to belong, he could give it to her, and in turn she would help them burn them all.

----

Six woke aching and stiff still on the table. Someone had kindly laid a blanket over her body, but she was still undressed on Vulpes table. She eased herself to a sitting position and turned to face the soft breathing in the room. Vulpes was asleep at his table clearly working on his next grand scheme. The inoperable terminal was now working, and she contemplated reading through it. Yet, he had sheltered her once more, perhaps this time she should let it go. Vulpes looked more his age in his sleep, the intensity of his gaze hidden made him seem gentler, as much as a sleeping lion can be called cute. Six dressed quietly before creeping out of the tent. The camp was still quiet as daylight was only just beginning to break, the cool air felt good on her skin and her chest felt less like it had been crushed by a giant robotic arm.

“So you’re still alive.”

“Of course, why wouldn’t I be Max?”

“Because any Legionnaire who had that sort of damage always dies.”

“Well thank my profligate medicine for it’s small miracles.”
“Hmmmm,”

“Vulpes is still asleep.”

“I know, probably at the table, he always does when he has a mission to plan.”

“I thought I could get him breakfast.”

“Then let us travel together.” Max walked ahead brusquely, Six almost having to jog to keep up.

“Can you slow down?” she panted. “My ribs are still rebuilding here.”

“Why!” he snapped, turning so sharply she collided with his front.

“Why what? I told you my ribs aren’t…”

“Why did they beat on you?”

“I don’t…”

“Don’t lie to me Six, most Legionnaires would have harassed you but not laid a finger on you. From what I’ve gathered you whispered something to the man that made him hit you.”

“I can’t possibly say what got him riled up,” she schooled her expression so that it was neutral.

“You do know. You were perfectly in control, a normal person would have fought back even a little. Despite what shit you spout about being useless you are certainly not defenseless.” he grabbed her arm and yanked her aside. “So tell me. Why?”

“I…I…” she stuttered as she decided whether to trust him or not. “Because it was the cleanest solution.”

“I need more.”

“The Legionnaire made derogatory comments about the Frumentarii. I can defend my own honour, but how they speak of you all…I lost it. Goaded him with the oldest insult in the book…something about the size of his dick and a disappointed goat, and let him rag on me. Now look who is getting crucified and who has earned favour with Caesar.”

Max scowled trying to discern if she was lying or not.

“I knew it,” he growled. “You will be the death of him.”

“Oh who?”

“Vulpes.” she opened her mouth to retort but he silenced her. “Play the games you want Six, but each time you do you put us at risk also. Vulpes has been told to protect you, do me a little favour and try and protect him,” he continued the rage ebbing from his voice with each word. “I like you Six, I can see your potential. But here, we’re a pack and for better or worse you belong to it.” Max released her stalking back towards the tents, Six rubbed her wrist, the true strength of the cuddly bear had left her wrist red and definitely sore. I suppose this was the friendly warning.

She got two bowls of porridge called “Leftover special” said the cook and returned upbeat to the tent. Max was already inside speaking to Vulpes about the upcoming day.

“I brought you some breakfast. Cook said it was the “Leftover special.”
“Oh dear lord.” he growled chomping through the bowl while scrawling through the map.
“Yesterday’s batch was terrible on it’s own.” Vulpes continued to read and scrawl notes so Six sat at the table choosing a tome from his shelf to read. “You will need to attend the flogging today.”

“Oh...alright then.”

“As you asked for the punishment, you should be there to see it administered. Then we will leave for the Strip.”

---

Six watched as her assaulter was dragged into the centre of the training area. He was lashed to the centre post and the remains of his shirt cut off him. Vulpes stood at her side and she focused on not looking away. The Legion believed every man was accountable for their actions she would show them she could be strong. Each lick of the whip ripped the man’s back into ribbons, a fine pink mist filling the air with each strike. But Six did not falter.

“Max told me why.” whispered Vulpes. “Though the sentiment is appreciated. I would avoid this again.”

“I understand that now. But I stand by my choice.”

“Good.”

-----

Vulpes did not like the machine on her hand at all. He trusted the transportation feature less. Six was making some final adjustments to her equipment. Apparently she could place the right outside McCarran. He had changed into his comfortable profligate armour and was stocked with enough weaponry to hopefully kill a tyrant.

“Alright. All set.” she held out her hand. “Time to go.”

-----

“Charges are set, the evidence is planted and hopefully Picus is out of the way.” gasped the Courier out of breath. “I could very much do with a nap.”

Vulpes grinned as the train began to move out of the station, he counted to three before pressing the button and it detonated, illuminating the night sky in a blinding flash and dull thud. His suspicion that the NCR were unaware of her defection had definitely been correct. The fools still trusted her and for that they had paid dearly.

“The let me take you home my dear.”
Six relished the feeling of warm water on her skin, despite the freedom of Novac there was something to be said for a warm functional shower. ‘James’ was exploring the apartment she could hear Victor’s constant nagging questions as she stepped out of the bath and began to dry off.

“But just how long you been with the little missy?”

“Victor, for the love of god. Go away. You’ve pestered him long enough. If he were a legion spy he’d have caved by now, they aren’t that clever. I want to sleep.”

“Tch, fine, you know ole Vic just wants you to be safe.”

“I’ll be fine.”

“I promise the only screams you’ll hear will be good ones.” purred ‘James’

Be still my heart…

-----

“Oh my god.” gasped Six.

They had breached House’s inner sanctum with a deadly cocktail of shotgun shells and rocket launchers. Vulpes hacked quicker that Six, so she had set him onto House’s computer while she fended off the Securitrons. Even fucking Jane had attacked them. Six was propped up behind a securitron case as Vulpes cracked the first lock. Six darted in first only to come face to face with another robot. It was only on a wing and a prayer that they had broached the second layer of security and rolled into the lift. The sound of the securitrons bashing against the wall began to echo away as they went into the bowel of the Lucky 38. The alarms were still blaring.

That led them to here.

“What monstrosity is this?” hissed Vulpes.

They stood before a twisted monstrosity of cables and cords that contorted into something like a nest. Instead there was a pod, something that needed coolant and glowed like a shiny egg. They stepped closer, guns still ready as Vulpes ducked for the computer.

“Just… Just stay away from the console! It doesn’t do anything!”

“Sounding awfully nervous aren’t we Mr. House.” shouted the Courier to goodness knows where. She drew closer to the pod, step by step.

“It seems to be controls for that...machine.”

“Can you open it?” she asked and he backed away tapping away at the keyboard. With a slow hiss the pod opened and a dessicated corpse was lifted out by a mechanical arm. His hair was overgrown, nails curled and gnarled. Tubes ran in and out of his body as if it was part of him. The only indication of life was his creamy yellow eyes circling and staring wildly. Six wanted to vomit.

“You’ve...done it...now. You dimwitted … cretin. You’ve ruined the seal. Killed me.”

“I doubt many are going to cry.”

“You’ve come back to kill me this time?”

“Yes. By the will of Caesar.”

“I don’t really care whom you serve you rabid dog.” sneered House. “But you, Six, becoming a whore for them?”

“Call it what you want. You are the cancer here.”

“Ironic, how this turned out. The thousands of hours I spent calculating the odds, running projections, planning for every contingency only to be done in by a mail carrier with a grandiosity complex.”

“Shouldn’t have stopped Victor from saving me then.”

“Just get it over with.”

Six raised her gun, but Vulpes grabbed the barrel. “I have another idea.” he returned to the console and tapped away.

“Begin decontamination procedure.”

“No! No! I could have made you rich!”

“Goodbye Mr. House.” waved Six

The pod sealed and filled with mist with the press of a button, Vulpes caused a burst of electricity to ignite the chamber, burning the old world corpse alive. Six watched impassively as House burned. With him dead her revenge was complete. Vulpes held her hand as they watched the last remnant of the old world burn.

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“So how about that dance then?” Six asked over a tall glass of water.

“Why?”

“I don’t know, I feel like a treat.”

“I burned your employer to death. Why should you get another reward?”

“Because I’m pretty? And I blew up a tramway for you?” she giggled.
“Then I say we are equal in footing.”

“Awwwww come on, don’t tell me Frumentarii can’t dance.” he made a low sort of growl before grabbing and pulling her to the dance floor. She giggled wrapping her arms around his neck as his hands traced her hips.

“A shame you’re not wearing that red dress.” he purred, rocking their bodies in a steady rhythm. “All that open skin begging to be touched.”

She looked up into his gaze, the familiar icy blues no longer cold or fearful. For Six, it was as if the rest of the world fell away and it was only them. Six and Vulpes, dancing in the dark. He smiled wickedly down on her, fondness replacing the malice it once bore. Everything seemed to slow as she stepped up to meet him and she could swear he leaned down to meet her in a kiss.

Six pressed her hands into the fabric of his shirt as one of his hands snaked into her hair and gently guided her. It started chaste and gentle, her soft lips against his rougher one. But he didn’t pull away, he pulled her closer and they lost themselves in each other till the dance was forgotten and all that remained was Vulpes and Six.
Timing

Chapter Notes

Hello! I was going to wait till the weekend, but I'm very excited to share this with you and chapter 13 is almost done!

A WARNING - Later in the chapter there is the discussion of surgery. Description isn't always my strength but if that bothers you, please be aware that the section marked ++++++ contains that bit. Also we have started to deviate from the main canon plotline. What new adventures will they face?

I hope you enjoy reading and are all doing well!

The world slowly came into focus once more. The chatter of the patrons growing louder, the pulse in her chest beating harder and Vulpes stood before her. Vulpes whom she had kissed. He seemed equally perturbed by the intensity of it all. What did it mean for them? Where could it lead for them? She bit her lip as his thumb traced her cheek. She made her mind up and interlaced her fingers with his and began to lead him away from the dance floor.

“Over so soon?” he teased tugging her back flush against his chest.

“I thought perhaps we could move our dance somewhere more… private?” she whimpered as his lips traced her neck.

“Then let us make way.”

-------------

Six practically dragged him towards the door, his eyes focused on the sway of her hips and the wicked smile on her lips. The kiss on the dance floor was unexpected but, surprisingly, he found himself wanting more. He had not really placed value on intimacy before, but the Courier...Six...she was igniting something new from within him. They pushed through the front door and Six held onto him dearly as she practically dragged him to the Lucky 38. He found his newfound hunger growing urging him forward. As she neared the doors he tugged on their bond and pulled her back into his arms. Strange how well she fit in his arms. He cupped her head and pulled her lips to his. Her small moan sent pleasure straight through his body. It was intense and heady and so addictive. He pressed her back into the wall, his body pinning hers as he ravished her mouth; her hands roamed his body admiring his form. He pressed his hips into hers, he was hard and eager as he held her close desperate for her touch. He growled when her nails raked lightly at his scalp. With his free hand he traced her curves his thumb skirting the underside of her breast as he ravaged her neck with deep love bites claiming her as his. Both hands now teased her breasts as his name on her lips was sinful. He pulled back gasping at the intensity of his need and growing desire to take her against the wall so the whole strip would see who pleased their saviour.
“Vulpes...please...” she gasped hands firmly on his shoulders.

“Tell me.” he growled low, closing the gap. She was magnetic, and his desire led him back to her. Slow and gentle. He told himself. Don’t frighten this fragile thing. “Tell me what you want.”

“Sir.” he vaguely registered the voice behind him. “SIR.” the voice said more firmly. He turned wanting to gut the other man, only to find Alerio looking rather fearful for his life.

“What!” he growled.

“There is an emergency. You are needed.”

Vulpes cursed under his breath, rationally he knew Alerio would not have come if it was not important. Despite how much he wished to continue, gods he wanted to continue, but duty came first.

“Duty calls?” asked Six her voice breathy from where he stole it away.

“I...yes.” he pressed his forehead against hers. “But I want to continue…” she pressed a soft kiss to his lips and he felt himself falling again.

“We will. I’ll be waiting.” she stroked his cheek and he leaned into the touch. “The 38 is always open to you.” she smiled before extracting herself from beneath him and breaking the connection he found himself unable to do.

He broke away from the wall and with fire in his veins he followed Alerio. He would sate his hunger for this need for her touch and to be touched and life would return to normal.

----

Six took the lift straight to House’s suite. Her body still felt the ghostly caress of Vulpes touch. It was everything she had hoped for, had dreamed about. To be touched and wanted and finally by the man she had hoped it would be. For so long she had hidden the guilt of being attracted to him and being mocked when Cass found out. But for a short, beautiful time she felt alive and it was perfect.

The doors opened into the now darkened suite. The once active securitrons remained inactive after House was roasted. She stepped past the wreckage towards the main panel, a small slot in the front of the machine was her goal. The platinum chip fit like a glove, the mainframe bursting into life.

“Yes Man? Are you there?” she asked the blank screen.

“Hey! Hi there! Wow isn’t this exciting I can tell that I’m going to like it in this mainframe! So much room!”

“We’ve got some ground rules to cover and not much time.”
"What is the problem?" Vulpes bit out through grit teeth; the crackle of the radio grating on his nerves.

"Caesar collapsed and in a coma. All the top ranked officials are being called in. That means you. Can the Courier bring you with her fancy doodad?" Maximus’s voice crackled through the headset.

"I believe she can."
"Good Lanius is almost here and I don’t think it’s out of concern for Caesar’s welfare."

"Fine. I will return soon."

-----

Six had changed into a simple vest and shorts both comfortable and easily removed. Yes Man chirped that the lift was in use and she smiled sitting on the edge of the desk. Vulpes stormed in clearly distressed and agitated. Six hopped off the table and met him halfway, he looked pale and worried.

“What’s happened?"

“Caesar is in a coma.”

“Shit.” she grabbed her pip-boy off the desk and reattached it, before hastily changing into her armour.

“I didn’t ask what I needed.”

“You don’t have to.” she replied stuffing her rucksack with extra medical supplies and food. “I’m ready to go and I’ve got all my main medical gear. If there is anything I can do. Just ask. I won’t hesitate to help.”

“Thank you.” he kissed her cheek gently. “You may want a scarf to cover your neck though.” she blushed heavily before wrapping a thin cloth scarf around her neck.

“I’m ready. We just need to go outside.”

----

“Thank the Gods you are here, Lanius is already kicking up shit about succession.” Maximus followed them towards Caesar’s tent. “He’s claiming he should take over with immediate effect.”

“What are the men saying?"
“Nothing at the moment, they’re all a bit stunned.”
“Let me see him.” added Six, “I may be able to stabilise him and find us some options.”

“Alright, but it’s going to be difficult. Lanius is not as open minded as I.”

-----

“You want to let some profligate whore examine our leader?” bellowed Lanius to the laughs of the Praetorian guard. “Are you truly so weak that you resort to their medicine.”

“You know that is a lie.” snapped Vulpes. Six had never see him this tense. Even Maximus was tense and standing in a way so he could jump in front of her. She itched to loose her temper but remembered the warning Max had given. “Are you truly going to sit there and let the Son of Mars die?” he snarled. “Caesar bid her welcome into the Legion and she is the most qualified in medicine. If you prevent us taking action to preserve his life and to make the rule of succession definite then you are nothing more than his murderer!”

“I agree with Vulpes.” Lucius chimed in and the guard silenced. “If we do nothing it is murder. Let the Courier look.”

Lanius fumed, the mood of the room turning upon him. “Fine, but do not cry in your bedrolls when she fails and Caesar is dead.” he stormed toward the three, she noticed the others tried to shield her. “Your pretty words may have swayed the masses Vulpes, but we both know she will fail.” he threatened low. “And when you do, I will be there to flay the flesh from your bones and break her slowly on your corpse.”

Six tried hard not to break his gaze in defiance, but it was invasive; like bugs were crawling under her skin. One thing was for sure, for the first time in a long time she was glad someone else was picking the battle.

“Six, follow Maximus.”

-----

Vulpes paced the room. What was taking so long? He’d seen her old world medicine bring miracles, surely if she jabbed a stimpack into Caesar it would heal him? Lanius has not returned to the tent, though the tension left in his wake was still palpable. Maximus appeared from a gap in the curtain and beckoned him in. He signalled Lucius wanting to appear as transparent as possible. Witnesses help with transparency.

“I’ve got good news and bad news.” she stated. “Good news is, I’ve managed to stabilise him. His radiation damage was very high, I’m honestly surprised he’s not a ghoul yet. Bad news is, that the tumour in his head is too advanced and needs to be removed as soon as possible.”

“How? We don’t have the technical knowledge.”

“Two ways. I could take a crack at it. I believe that I can operate but there is a likelihood it will kill him. I’m reckon there is about a 70% chance of his survival. The second option is to repair the Auto-Doc. It’s far more precise if it was in full working order. I’d put his survival at 80 - 85%”
“You mean you can’t guarantee it?”

“No, he’s old, already weakened by the radiation damage and cancer. Nothing is risk-free with the brain.”

“How do we repair the Auto-Doc?”

“Vaults are our best bet. The Auto-Docs were already trashed in the vaults I’ve been into and I’ve visited most. Except…”

“Except?” questioned Lucius.

“The one Vulpes and I passed on the way here earlier this week. Vault 34.” Lucius scoffed at the notion as Vulpes continued to pace. “I can be there and back within the night. If I leave now I can be back within hours, if I can’t find the part I operate.”

“I cannot go with you, with Lanius stirring shit up, Lucius and I are all that stand between him and victory.”

“I could go with her.” offered Maxiumus.

“I hoped you’d offer old friend, but I could not ask it of you.”

“Gladly. It’s a lovely night for a trip”

“Do you have a gun, most vault things you want to keep at arms length.” asked the Courier.

“No,” replied

“Well I’ve got several. Let’s get you kitted out and go.” Six unclipped the Pip-Boy from Caesar and reattached it as Vulpes watched. He hated being powerless and right now he was adrift and aimless. He should be doing something. All relied on the Courier and even she was doubtful. If Caesar fell then they were routed, he had predicted it but hadn’t realised this outcome would be so soon.

“Be careful, both of you.” he ordered and then they were gone.

-------

“I’m getting a lot of radiation registering.” she ferreted through her bag. “Eat one of these.” Max leaned forward and licked it from her palm. “Ewwww… are you a fucking brahmin?”

“I had a joke prepared about eating you up, but it seems...someone else got there first.” he pressed the side of her scarf down.

“Don’t even joke about it.”

“I wasn’t going to, except I need to have a talk with Vulpes involving ‘I told you so.’”

“Asshole.” she chuckled. “Here, combat shotgun. I named her Bessie cause she kicks like a brahmin so you two should match.”

“Thank you.”
“Keep her tight against your shoulder, she’s not a spray and pray type of gun. In there you’ll want to keep combat close. I’m guessing you have a blade or something?”

“Power hammer.”

“Fair enough.”

They killed a few geckos on approach to the vault door, the rads increasing in scale. Six popped another pill and forced another on Max as they reached the front door.

“I’ve always wanted to go in a vault. Are they as mystical as they seem?”

“Not really.” she sighed as the heavy door began to roll back on it’s hinges. “Mostly they are full of dead things and pain.”

With the door fully retracted, they stepped inside. It was remarkably intact for an entrance with no outward signs of battle. Six took point searching the lockers and pocketing the loot while Max kept watch. She hooked her pip-boy into the local terminal and downloaded a map. “Clinic is on this floor.”

They progressed through the dark, the dim light of her pip-boy the only illumination. A low growl echoed down the corridor.

“Ferals.” she whispered as the first rounded the corner dressed in ragged vault suits.

-----

Poor bastards.

Max watched impassively as Six scoured the clinic. They had fought their way through what had once been the main social area. She had explained that due to the radiation exposure over time it was likely the original occupants had become ghouls early on. The feral ghouls had nothing remaining of their past selves but she spent a time trying to convince him that normal ghouls were harmless. He wasn’t convinced.

“AHA!” she shouted excitedly. “Here’s the Auto-Doc.”

“Does it have the piece?”

“That is the question.” she replied unwrapping the scarf and getting out her tools.

“WOW.” whistled Max. “He was really keen wasn’t he?”

Six stared at him puzzled till he pointed at his neck and she quietly swore.

“The feeling was mutual.” she muttered.
“Was it now? Oh no wonder he was so pissed on the radio.”

“We are not going to have this conversation, surrounded by corpses, Max.”

“Why not?”

“Because I don’t have the answers to what you want to know. I don’t think I even know how to define it.”

“My previous warning still stands. Think how you will affect him. Keep him alive. If it is meant to be it will. But don’t fuck up what has taken us years to build.”

“Yes Maximus.” she mocked as she examined the electronics. “Bingo! It seems mostly intact.”

“So you have the part?”

“I’m taking the whole unit. Just to be sure.”

“Then we best not delay.”

----

Vulpes heard Lanius’s shout before Six entered the tent. Maximus was quickly on her heels carrying a large unit.

“Did you find it?”

“Yes.” She replied after directing Max where to put it. “I need some things can you arrange it at all?”

“Of course.”

He noted on a scrap of paper Six’s list. Purified water, clean linens, soap and hot water. He checked every item to be sure and sent for the items required as Six returned to Caesar’s side. Vulpes quietly followed.

“Also we need a table, we’ll ruin the bed otherwise.” Six upended her rucksack and emptied the contents on the bed next to Caesar sorting them into piles of tools, medical tools and medicine. Her small toolkit was near the bottom of the pile, wrapped in leather as she set to work on the Auto-Doc. He admired the confidence she had in her skills as she instructed Max to lift the heavy casing. Inside wires and blocks linked together into this life saving machine. Vulpes could be proud that he could use old world technology if needed, but he didn’t understand it’s inner working. The tension in the room grew even more tense. Caesar would groan in his sleep and Six would make adjustments giving him more medicine and painkillers. Lucius continued to hold order outside the tent. Vulpes considered what contingencies they needed to put in place. Lanius was no doubt scheming.

When one of the Legionnaires would bring something she needed he had to gain Six’s attention with a touch; she was so wrapped up in her task. Hours passed as she tinkered and fiddled and read dials. Even he was beginning to doubt her ability.

“What is taking so long?” Snarled Lanius entering Caesar's room. “Can't do it whore?”

He smiled when Six ignored him, her attention focused intently on the screen. “How hard can it
be?” He mocked reaching for the wires when Six lashed out with her wrench.

“Unless you want to murder him, don't fucking touch it.”

Lanius went to retaliate but paused realising every man in the room was ready to gut him alive. “I have to run a diagnostic. If I don't there's a risk it cuts the wrong bit of his brain and he dies. I don't want that so I’m checking it works.”

“I hope for your sake it does.”

---

Six was beginning to tire. She had cleaned and repaired the diagnostic unit and ran countless tests to check it was running flawlessly. And now she had brahmin-shit-for-brains questioning her work? He was lucky she only swung at him and didn’t stab it through his eye. After some general posturing and bickering he had backed off, but her silence seemed to piss him off more than anything else. She hoped he would get bored and leave but instead he kept watching her. With some help from Max she managed to get the casing and screen back into place. Switching it on it buzzed slowly to life and she ran a scan on herself. Some Rad damage, healing wounds and general fatigue no condition that was new to her.

“It’s ready.” she sighed washing her hands in the bowl.

“What now?”

“I need everyone out. The Auto-Doc can work on it’s own but it needs a nurse, which will be me. I need to scrub the operating table and clean Caesar to reduce the risk of infection especially near the brain.”

“You think we are foolish enough to leave a profligate alone with Caesar? She will kill him in his sleep.”

“Considering I just murdered my employer in the name of Caesar and razed the enemy’s bunker to the ground I would have thought my intentions were clear!” she snapped. “If someone is going to stay I will accept Vulpes, he is the only one calm enough…”

“I am calm Courier.” snarled Lanius.

“Unlikely.” she took a sip of water and swirled it around her mouth. She hadn’t realised how thirsty she had been. “Vulpes or no-one.”

“Fine. Do your job Frumentarii.”

+++++++++

Vulpes watched silently as Caesar was washed by his slaves. Six was focused on preparing iodine solutions to disinfect the table and auto-doc and began to wipe down the equipment and her skin. She beckoned him over and did the same taking particular care over his hands.
“If you want to leave at any point, feel free too. It will get pretty intense.”

“I will do fine Courier.” he reassured but she was already flitting around the tent rearranging the machinery.

The attendants bowed to him as they were ushered out of the tent. Six was spreading the brown mixture across Caesar’s cleanly shaven head.

“Vulpes please can you stand to the side. I’ve given him a high dose of Med-X but I still don’t know how he will react and to be honest, be ready with stimpacks and my tools.”

He watched with morbid fascination as she typed the commands diagnosing and isolating the tumor. With the cancer located she gave it permission to continue and the arms of the machine sprang to life. The light focused on his face and the machine took it’s measurements as she checked each procedure before it took place. The machine drew a line and the scalpel followed it cutting away the skin. With the skull bared it began to drill and cut away the area it needed as Six switched to watch the incision. Vulpes had done many things that others would describe as despicable or cruel, but watching his friend and mentor be opened by a machine that held no conscience worried him. They were so helpless. The smell of burning bone filled the room and Six tried not to gag. With the piece of skull removed Six placed it on a sterilised metal tray ready to be reattached he guessed. He couldn’t help but take a peek and was disappointed by the pink organ covered in blood vessels. It was remarkably...normal. He had always thought Caesar special, that was what they were taught to believe devoutly. Yet here, under the knife he was just as unremarkable as the rest of them.

“Vulpes,” Six asked him noting his confusion. “Are you alright?”

“I am...I am.” he replied stepping aside as she mopped the blood and fluid away.

“Well hold your breath this is the tricky part.”

+++++++  

Vulpes left the tent first. All that misery and anxiety caused by such a tiny lump of flesh. Such a small thing could render even Caesar an invalid. The air was much fresher than the tent. Blood and the smell of bone clung to his skin and it was all too close for comfort.

“The Courier,” he announced. “Has successfully completed the operation to remove Caesar’s affliction. Now, we must hold vigil till he awakes, if he is going to awaken. Get the priestesses and arrange prayers.”

----

Six kept to a routine. Check his pulse, check his blood pressure and temperature. Any change monitor at a shorter interval. She did this for hours using the Auto-Doc to monitor his brain activity. She was quietly optimistic, but unless he woke up there was no telling the extent of the damage or the consequences to her life. 15 minutes passed again and she began her routine once more.
Please gods above, let him wake up.
Interruptions

Chapter Notes

With Caesar's life in the balance Six and Vulpes try and catch a break. Six dreams again...

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Six hours. Six hours and the shitty old man hadn't woken up. Courier Six yawned deeply, fatigue was beginning to set in as the adrenaline wore off. For all her monitoring nothing had changed, his heart was steady, his brainwaves even. All that he needed to do was wake up. She had been alone since Vulpes left to address the crowd. She was sure she heard the sound of some women wailing and a man leading prayer. She was so tired, it was growing difficult to keep her eyes open as she sat leaning against the bookcase.

“Stupid fucking old man, wake up already. Can't you hear how hurt they are?” She muttered under their breath. It's not like he could hear her. At least she thought he couldn’t.

“I really hope he didn't hear that.” She hadn't heard Vulpes enter.

“Well if he does he can tell me off when he wakes the fuck up.” Her last words were almost spit out. Tiredness always did make her more testy.

“I brought you some coffee. Not as pure as the 38’s though”

“I don't care at this point.” Vulpes handed her the warm cup of sweet, sweet caffeine, she took a tentative sip and relaxed as the caffeine effect set in. Or at least in her head it did. “How are things outside?”

“Hanging by a thread. They have hope but it is fragile. It all depends on…”

“Lazy bones here waking up.”

“I really hope he doesn’t hear you.”

“Hear...what?”

-----

“Caesar?” Vulpes jumped to his feet rushing to get to his master’s side.

“Who is lazy?”

“You are, been sleeping on the job.” Replied the Courier and Vulpes tensed, now was not a good time for joking. “I mean you only survived brain surgery. I'd expect the legendary Caesar to be crucifying profligates by now.” Six had managed to get to her feet by now to stand at his side.
“The headaches?”

“Cured. Though you may be sore where I drilled through your skull.” She began to check his vitals again. Caesar looked to Vulpes for clarification.

“You collapsed into a coma. The Courier diagnosed it as a tumour and fixed the Auto-Doc and operated removing it. We’ve been waiting for you to wake up.”

“I see. We’d best not keep them waiting then.”

“Careful, you may look well but your system has taken a shock. You’re not a young man anymore. Plus some tenderness may remain.” She warned and he nodded in response.

Vulpes led the way and held the tent flap for Caesar who stepped slowly and carefully towards his throne. He noted Six had not given him more painkillers probably because he could argue back now. He ushered in the slaves telling them to follow the Courier's instructions to the letter before returning to Caesar's side with a drink.

“Lord Caesar it gladdens our spirit to see that you have fought off this affliction with such vigor.” began Lanius.

“It seemed news of my death was spread rather prematurely.” Stated the leader. He had no need to raise his voice to be heard. “I am cured of my ailment and survived thanks to the endeavours of my loyal advisors. I trust that you ran the camp with decorum.” Lanius remained silent. “Tonight I wish the camp to celebrate, the son of Mars lives. Until sundown I will sleep. Lucius, Vulpes I suggest you do as well and see to it that the Courier is cleaned up too. She will be my guest of honour.”

“As you will it.”

-----

Six heard the cheers and shouts from the throne room as she rinsed off the last of tools and the equipment. For all this fancy tech it still needed someone to clean up after it. She rubbed in the the last of her iodine rinse onto her hands and arms to disinfect them once more.

“Six, this is Caesar's personal slave.”

“I thought they all were his slaves?” She questioned Vulpes indicating the other women in the room.

“Ah. No. As in she is responsible for his person. Food, water and other physical things. Please tell her what care he will require in your absence.”

“Oh? Oh alright.” She nodded explaining slowly the steps for checking the wound in case it opened up, what signs to look for if there was a problem and above all get him to rest. The slave
repeated the instructions back to her and she smiled reassuringly. With her gear packed away once
more she felt tired to her bones.

“Come on, we’ve been ordered to get some rest.” He led her out of the tent, she respectfully bowed
to Caesar as she passed his throne noting his pallor was of a good colour so she had little worry
about immediately.

The sun had risen and the camp was in full flow. She noticed that the camp went silent as she
passed the men all stopping to stare at the woman who had saved their leader. Six almost wished
she could go back to anonymity but at least they got out of her way then. By the time they reached
the Frumentarii camp the crowd was thinner but instead they came over and thanked her, shook her
hand. It felt like home.

She stepped into Vulpes tent and dumped her pack on the floor. She collapsed on the chair
slouching down into it as if it was the finest stuffed sofa. The weariness was finally setting in, she
had been awake for hours under pressure. She wanted to curl up in Novac and sleep it off. Vulpes
sat opposite, looked equally tired and haggard.

“Do you have a dress in that bag?” Asked Vulpes.

“Not in your size.” She grumbled squeaking when he kicked her. “They're all back in the strip.”

“Alright then. Nap first, then go get one. Caesar is holding a feast and you're the guest of honor.”

“Shit does that mean I have to look proper?”

“Proper and pretty and non-threatening.”

“Ughhhhh… Can't I just wear my armour?”

“No.”

“Pleaaaassee.”

“No.”

“Whhhhyyyyy?”

“Because I've been charged with making sure you look pretty.”

“Perverrrrt.”

“That’s three.”

“Oh fuck.”

“Perhaps later. Right now, get out of your clothes and get in the bed.”

Six groaned and rolled her eyes, she was tired and wanted to argue but bed sounded good.

“Pervert” she mumbled standing and getting out a clean shirt to sleep in. As she leant forward she
cried out as Vulpes smacked her ass. It didn't hurt but was more of a shock.

“I warned you.” He growled, but his eyes held no anger, only hunger. Six suppressed a shiver.

“Anything else you wanted to say my dear?”
Six shook her head and focused on changing, she left her underclothes on and slipped into a shirt.

“Should I set an alarm?”

“Please, for a few hours.”

“Done.”

The tent was already warm as the sun had risen., Vulpes didn't bother getting under the blanket, just lay on top in nothing but his boxers. Six started openly as he rested with his eyes closed. He was muscular but not in a way that made him seem like he was stuffed into his skin. There was still a softness to him and if Six wasn't so tired she'd be tempted to lick her way down his chest and see how well his skin looked with love bites. She must have stared a while because when she looked at him again he was watching her admire him. He grinned and she wished the floor would swallow her whole.

----

Six hadn't realised that he was watching. It was nice to see such raw hunger and desire in her eyes. *Did she just lick her lips?* He wanted to chuckle but was afraid of breaking the moment. Most women in the Legion looked at him with fear. His carefully forged reputation served him well keeping people afraid and at arm's length. However he found that hers was the gaze he wanted to keep. Six seemed to shake herself out of her reverie, her eyes comically wide when she realised he had been watching. He held out his hand and tugged her down towards the bed til she climbed in beside him. He hummed as she placed her hands on his chest and he wrapped an arm around her.

“Goddamn.” She mumbled, her voice breathy. “You remind me of a sculpture I saw in a book once.” She ran her hands down his chest and back up to his shoulders. The feeling of her hands on his skin was so intense yet so simple. He closed his eyes relishing the sensation of intimacy and craving more. “Swinging that ripper of yours definitely had benefits.”

“I'm glad you approve.” He chuckled. “No-one appreciates the hard work it takes to punish a profligate.” She laughed playfully smacking his chest and he found himself smiling. That fragile feeling between them relit. She fit so neatly against his side as he pulled her close, her leg wrapped around his hip and he cupped her ass with his other hand. There was no gentleness in their kiss this time, just hunger as she pressed and rolled her hips against his already hard cock. He groaned and ground against her when she rolled her hips again her soft gasp the sweetest sound. He kissed her neck as she ran her nails through his hair and he teased the marks he had already left. She whined and moaned his name like a prayer when he turned them pulling her beneath him and spreading her legs, and they eagerly wrapped around him.

“Vulpes.” She purred, tracing her hands down his chest. “I want you.” She stated, no hint of fear or disgust in her eyes. He reacted to her admission seizing her in a passionate kiss, he pinned her hands beneath his as he kissed her desperately and sought more. When they broke they were panting, bodies hot and still pressed together each roll of his hips made her arch against him her ample breasts pressing against his shirt.

“I want you too,” he growled. “Can I?” She nodded but he noticed she tensed. “Speak to me Six. I won’t be mad.” He asked.
Six was wet, she could feel the delicious press of him against her underwear and the fact there was little between them. She was fairly sure she could come with the slightest touch. It was so intense and addictive feeling him against her. But she wanted more...more of everything and his question had surprised her.

“It’s nothing.” She tried to get him back to the task at hand.

“Something worries you. You get a crease here when you're worried.” He kissed her forehead. “No lies, I want you, but only if you are ready. Tell me.”

“I...I...” she blushed, she hated how mortified she felt but as stupid as it sounded she didn't want to disappoint him. She had heard too many stories of disappointments.

“Vulpes are you asleep yet?” Max stuck his head in the tent, despite whispering it was like a bucket of ice was dropped on them and she squeaked hiding against Vulpes’ chest. “Oh shit!” Cursed the other man. “Didn't mean to interrupt! Please don't castrate me!” He pleaded retreating out the door. Vulpes lay on top of Six and slowly began to shake. She realised he was laughing and began to laugh as well.

“It seems fate has a way of interrupting.” He rolled to the side and released her and with a grumble she rolled over and he spooned her from behind.

“Don't be too hard on him.” She chuckled.

“I was thinking something involving the latrines.”

“You can't punish him every time.”

“Can't I?”

----

Six felt good in his arms, it felt good to have someone there. He stroked her arm absentmindedly as they lay together.

“What worries you?” He asked, rather than pressed. She turned to face him again.

“I...” she buried her head in the pillow, her cheeks stained red. “I don't remember having sex.” she blurted out, hoping saying it quickly would make it better.

“The bullet?” She nodded. “What about since then?”

“There wasn't anyone who interested me...or were accessible.” He recalled the passage he read in her diary fondly but to hear it from her lips was bliss.

“Oh?”
“Well at the time you were an enemy and known for well...Nipton.”

“How long?” He purred.

“Nipton. Your voice. It was so sinful but it stuck with me as a guilty crush. But then, I suppose when we met on the strip and talked it was refreshing to meet an equal and the crush got worse.”

“So the pure Courier was seduced by the wicked fox.” She snorted in derision.

“There is no way I am pure, have you seen what happened to my last boss? And the hundreds of people that got in my way?” He smiled and kissed her sweetly.

“Still, your lack of experience does not diminish you in my eyes. Nor does it disappoint me. I never thought a profligate woman could interest me, they were all the same and all of them used me as much as I did them.” he sighed. “Then that night with the red dress.” He smirked. “And I knew I found someone interesting. So you cannot disappoint me. Not unless you turn out to be a drunken harlot.”

“Well shit, I best hide my bourbon.” She smiled warmly. “Thank you.” She replied. “I want this so badly, but it's just unknown. But...uh...if earlier was anything to go by, I know I would enjoy...it.”

“Name it what it is, don't hide it away.”

“Sex!” she squeaked and buried her face against his chest. He pressed a kiss against her forehead.

“In time you may become more comfortable. But for now, you must tell me if you are unhappy. I know my brothers are known by a certain...reputation. It is not me.”

“What is it you want?” she asked.

“Mutual desire; to be wanted. More specifically to be wanted and not used.”

“Well boy do I have news for you.” she teased kissing his neck up to his lips. “I am rather...ravenous…” she teased between kisses.

“Then I am not disappointed at all.”

----

Six was standing in the middle of the top floor of the Lucky 38 but it wasn’t quite like she remembered. The room seemed brighter, without being blinding. Like an aura of warmth filled the clinical space it used to be. House’s mainframe, well technically Yes Man, hummed content with his kingdom. She stood looking out the window watching the desert come to life but it was so peaceful compared to the relentless fire it was normally. She hummed as strong arms wrapped around her waist pulling her against a hard chest. Familiar lips traced her neck and through the thin silk of her nightgown he palmed her breasts, teasing just how she liked.

“Come back to bed darling.” the familiar growl to his voice promised such sinful things that she let herself be walked back into the room. The familiar blue eyes of Vulpes watching her
with hunger and dare she hope... love?

He held Six’s hand and led her to the bed, he sat on the edge and pulled her onto his lap her legs wrapped around his hips as he pulled her into a kiss so sweet and tender, she felt like her chest would explode. Vulpes wrapped an arm around her hips and pulled her closer opening her legs further and pressing her crotch against his hard cock. Eagerly she rubbed against his cock, her mouth open and gasping with pleasure as his hands guided her movements. She ran her fingers through his hair and tugging at his hair as he growled nibbling on her lip.

“My Fox.” she purred, her forehead pressed against his and he pulled her into a tight embrace his face nuzzling against her chest.

“My Courier.” he replied. With the hidden strength she knew he possessed he lifted them and dropped her onto the bed. She scooted back as he climbed slowly over her, like a hunter ready to pounce. She bit her lip in anticipation, her eyes taking the image of his naked torso as she spent time touching him. Vulpes leant forward kissing across her collarbone the gentlest of kisses that grew more sensitive the closer he got to her breasts. His thumbs traced the underside of her breasts hoping he would touch her breasts more. Six pressed herself against his touch moaning lewdly as he squeezed and massaged her breasts neglecting her aching nipples. He ignored her pleas as his mouth focused on the tops of her breasts as she begged him to touch where she wanted.

“Vulpes!” She shouted when he latched onto a nipple sucking roughly and finally gave her what she wanted; her nails digging in his back as she ground against him. Wait? Where did my nightdress go? She thought but his mouth distracted her. He kissed his way down towards her aching sex. She was wet and slick and oh so sensitive. Vulpes hooked his thumbs under her underwear waistband and dragged them down slowly. He pressed her thighs apart and settled between them his fingers circling her clit as she scrunched her eyes closed in concentration.

“That’s it darling.” He growled. “I want you to feel so good. Your pretty little cunt is so eager.” He demonstrated his finger easily pressing inside as Six arched to his touch. His free hand alternated between lazily tweaking her nipple and resting possessively on her hip. He teased her slowly keeping her on edge.

“Please Vulpes!” She begged. “Please let me come! Please! Please!”

“As you wish.” He smirked his thumb pressed against her clit, stroking and making quick circles as she felt her peak build. “Watch me.” Vulpes asked. “Watch me as you come, show me how good it feels.” Six thrashed against the covers as the sensation began to build, Vulpes stroked her cheek helping her focused on him as his fingers brushed a certain spot inside her and she came screaming his name and shuddering through her orgasm as he eased her gently back to earth.

“Now for the main event.”
Six woke with a start. But...but... As reality set in she remembered she was in bed with Vulpes where they had fallen asleep. But her dream had been so real, she could still feel the aftershocks of her orgasm. She wriggled in Vulpes iron grip, it seemed he didn't want to let go, but as she did delicious pleasure coursed through her veins and she realised she was drenched.

“Someone is finally awake.” Whispered Vulpes as she flinched. “Seems like you had a rather...intense dream.” He smirked.

“Oh my god!” She screeched pushing away and rolling onto the floor as Vulpes grinned wickedly. “I'm sorry!” She begged as panic set in.

*No wonder the dream felt so real.*

---

Vulpes remained silent watching Six as she fell asleep. He wanted to be satisfied that she would have no nightmares before he rested. He knew full well he couldn't sleep in this heat anyway. Six tucked in close to him, her breath tickling his chest and as he closed his eyes and started to drift off and dream of his next move. It had been only an hour or so before she began moving. Six had managed to wrap her thigh over his leg, her pussy pressed tight against his thigh. He tried not to think about how damp her underwear was and how willing she was even as his cock strained against his boxers.

“Vulpes.” She mumbled. He ran his fingers through her hair reassuring her when she frowned and moaned, her puss grinding against him.

*What sort of dream was she having??*

He watched as she frowned and moaned in her sleep, her hips rolling and writhing against his thigh. He failed miserably to quell his desire as he cupped himself stroking his cock leisurely to the sound of his name on her lips. He felt a quiet pride that she even dreamed of him.

Six’s movements began to quicken as her hold on him tightened. He recognised the tell tale shaking of her orgasm as she fell apart in bliss.

They needed to find a place without interruption very soon.

By the look on her face when he asked her about the dream was priceless and her heady blush brought satisfaction and the urge to tease her more. He tried to encourage her back to bed, to perhaps re-enact her dream. Yet sadly, the alarm went off.

Chapter End Notes

*These poor souls and the hapless fools who interrupt them. Thank you so much for reading and your continued support and comments. It's the most I've ever had and it's been great to hear your thoughts and know it's enjoyed beyond my head.*

*Coming next: Caesar's Dinner Party or How not to stab Lanius with a fork...*
Chapter Summary

Six and Vulpes attend Caesar's celebratory dinner.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

“All latrines cleaned.” Reported Max, though his smell had announced his arrival.

“Good god man, what is that smell?”

“Gaius had some bad Brahmin.”

“Ugh.” Vulpes felt a little sympathy for his friend. But only a little. “Go toss yourself in the river, I need you in Caesar's tent tonight.”

“So you didn't seal the deal then?”

“I take it back go clean…”

“No no no no no! I mean...uh…Vulpes you look so tense? Is a mission giving you stress?”

“Six isn't a mission. But I am concerned about our latest reports. There has been little progress made in key camps and reports are conflicting…”

“We have changed the signal to little effect.”

“Someone is interfering. We will have to question those we suspect.”

“Can I help?” Asked Six stepping inside and it was like time stopped. She was dressed in a simple dress of navy blue, there were no shoulders but it was far more modest than her red dress. The women of the strip called it a swing dress, the skirts billowed out emphasising her hips but the chest area was tight. White stripes accented the collar and shoulders. Six had pinned her hair up once more into an old world style but wore little make up. He noted she wore a thin scarf that hid his marks carefully. Probably wise. Six looked between the two, confused at their silence and non-responsiveness. “Hello...Earth to Max and Vulpes?” Max was first to respond.

“That would be helpful, especially from your NCR contacts.”

“Vulpes said I had to be prim and proper, does this count? Do I look wrong?” She did a little twirl, her skirt rising. Was that a garter belt? Vulpes nodded mesmerised and dumbstruck.

“You don’t.” Replied Max. “Perhaps I should leave you two. Gotta get me looking pretty too. Can't have you upstage me.”

Vulpes stayed sat at his desk afraid that if he moved his hands would see what else hid under her petticoats.

“You made him clean the latrines didn't you.”
“How could you tell?”

“The smell left with him.” She chuckled. “Are you sure this is OK? I didn't want to be too exposed, with Lanius being there.”

“Even in rags you look like Venus herself.” He stated and realised it was the truth not one of his lies. Six placed her bag on the table as sauntered towards him. She ran her hand down his cheek in a gentle caress.

“You look hungry.” She purred as his hands wrapped behind her hips and pulled her close so he was waist height. She moaned as he ran his hand up her calves over the ever so thin stockings only the rich could afford.

“A treasure from the 38?” He questioned.

“Not the only one.” He slowly traced his hands upwards thumbs tracing the inside of her thighs till he met skin. He groaned pressing his forehead to her stomach.

“Garter belt.”

“Mmhmm.” She hummed in response. “And if you're a good Inculta you might find out what else is underneath.”

“You... will be the death of me.” He groaned reluctantly removing his hands. “Excuse me, I need a cold bath.”

------

Six was surprised by how civil the celebration in the tent was. Sadly she could not say the same for outside the tent. Vulpes had cleaned himself up wearing his full armour, but had left the dog head behind. He looked so regal and formal it was a side she didn't see much of. Even Lanius seemed to have given his armour a polish. Six entered behind Vulpes, bag clutched close. Despite being as covered as completely as possible she still felt as if she was walking into the lion's den.

“Ah! My guest of honour!” Cheered Caesar, he indicated a seat by his right side a position she knew was held for the most important member of the court. “You have brought us much good fortuneCourier! Let us celebrate this fateful union.” Caesar offered her a goblet of wine which she obediently drank as a sign of peace. Vulpes watched her with a twinkling of pride.

“As thanks for your welcome Lord Caesar I have brought you a spoil of war.” She pulled the dusty bottle from her bag. “This is House’s oldest and most valuable bottle of wine. A relic even pre-war. He had saved it to celebrate making New Vegas entirely is. Only fitting that it be opened by those that killed him. House bragged the time of his victory was near. Now we toast you my lord.”

“Brains, violence, beauty and gifts.” Caesar laughed taking the bottle and ordering a slave to pour it. “To my ongoing health.”

“Cheers!”
The first course was a light soup of vegetables and meat stock. Compared to the rations the Frumentarii received it was almost luxury. Perhaps it was intentional. She engaged Lucius in polite conversation playing the coy, weaker woman who was impressed by his strength. The ruse seemed to work as Lucius spoke and filled her silence. He seemed to forget she performed brain surgery.

Lanius sat stiff beside her. He was a giant compared to her; broad and bulky. He even made Vulpes seem small. Rather than join in the conversation he scowled not used to a woman in his usual seat.

“The soup is delicious.”

“The infantry cook does well. He ensures my men are well fed and fighting fit. It's very different to the cowards meals.” Boasted Lanius. She noticed Vulpes jaw was tense. This was a sore point. “They don't need the best food to work those brains, we must distribute resources by the greatest need.”

“Surely a whole army is more effective?” She asked feigning ignorance.

“A whole army yes. But you see Vulpes the snake spends his time slithering around rather than fighting. Hence the food goes to the real troops.”

*What a dick.* She thought finishing her soup as Lanius called for more wine. *Then despite knowing he may not see the food Vulpes still negotiated for them… the injustice to Vulpes men irritated and stung. The slight he must have felt was worse.*

----

“The Courier cleans up well doesn't she?” Whispered Lucius eying Six as if she was fair game. “Even Lanius is enraptured by her. He hasn't called her whore yet.”

“It is only a matter of time.”

“You think Caesar will give her to me as a war prize? Those red lips are making me hard and as much as my wife pleases me...a young thing like that...” He chuckled. Vulpes had to resist the urge to garrotte his friend over the fish course. Though, he knew deep down Six would be annoyed if she missed the chance. In fact the whole dinner made him sick to the stomach. The look of pity she wore when she heard about the food situation rubbed him the wrong way. It made him appear weak when he was not and her apparent pleasant conversation with Lanius was worrying. Lanius was always ahead of him doing everything he could to destroy Vulpes’ work. He would not put it past the legate to try and claim Six.

Six watched him cautiously in trying to guard his thoughts he remained neutral, but it unnerved him how easily she read his mood.

“Tell me Courier about your hunt.” Asked Caesar. “Vulpes told me the bare facts. Entertain me.”
Six swallowed her food and looked around skittish. The entire tent was focused on her. He hoped she realised it was a test.

“Well, it all starts with a robot, a grave and some very shitty odds…”

----

“And he actually believed you?” Caesar laughed as she recounted a tale of trying to convince the Benny of her peaceful motives. The slaves began to serve a dessert of fruit and honey as Six took a sticky bite of a honey nut treat. She quietly moaned at the taste, it was one of her guilty pleasures. When she opened her eyes she remembered where she was and the leering looks of the other dinner guests perturbed her as she licked her fingers clean.

“Sorry, it's been awhile since I’ve had some.” She blushed. “Had some honey treats. I mean.”

_Gods above dig me a hole to hide in._

“ It's no matter Courier, enjoy yourself. I am just relieved the Tumour is out.”

“Well I kept it in a jar for you in as a memento, it’s on the bookshelf.” She replied “or in case you wanted to see what a few rogue cells could do.”

“That's what that was. I told Vana it wasn't an egg.” He chuckled.

Something hand shaped brushed her leg. Lanius continued to eat, it must have been an accident.

“Yeah, please don't eat it, it won't make you ill but it is technically cannibalism.”

Again a hand traced her leg but this time Lanius didn't pretend. He simply stared at her breasts as he squeezed her thigh. She prized his fingers off and hissed low and with a smile. “Do not touch me.”

----

Vulpes could tell something was wrong. Although the Courier was smiling, it lacked the warmth he knew it contained. Whatever she had said to Lanius clearly had the reverse effect. But Lanius was not a man easily refused. Vilpes turned to Caesar expecting the elder to step in and get Lanius to back off and leave her be. Instead Caesar watched and shook his head in warning to Vulpes. _Why can I not intervene?_ Lanius took a sip of wine and Six grabbed at something under the table again. Still Caesar told him to wait. He didn't like Lanius touching her and clearly she didn't like it either.

“I FUCKING WARNED YOU!” She shouted startling Lucius. In the blink of an eye she had grabbed the dinner fork and slammed it down with all her brute strength towards her thigh. Lucius thought it was peculiar until the howl of Lanius who recoiled and yanked his hand back, Six’s fork still embedded in it.

“Fucking whore!” Yelled Lanius his free hand pulled back to strike but Six was quicker, her meat
knife pressed neatly against his throat.

“Perhaps Lanius,” began Caesar. “This will be a lesson to you. Not all free women are weak and the Courier certainly isn't. I suggest you remember that next time you make a move on her.”

Lanius growled but took the bandage offered to him. He stood to leave but was ordered back into place. He fumed silently as he washed his wound and bandaged it not caring if he made a mess near Six. Vulpes realised then Caesar proved she wasn't like the other slaves and wasn't weak. Once more he was pleased he trusted his leader. Though next time he hoped it didn't involve someone groping his woman. His woman? Gods above.

“I suppose I should bring the dinner to a close and begin the real business.” He clapped his hands and the slaves began to clear the mess away. “Courier would you wait in my bedroom.” Six nodded but made a point of picking up the bloody fork before leaving. The message was clear. “Right gentlemen, to business.” Vulpes shifted more comfortably in his seat. What could they possibly have to discuss?

“That bitch should…”

“That bitch has achieved more for me in a short time than you have in months. Woman or not she has proven herself loyal. Or do you wish to challenge my leadership again?”

“No lord.” Growled Lanius.

“I wish to speak of my succession. As the Courier likes to remind me I am old and have no blood heirs.” He paused taking a drink. “So, that leaves me my loyal lieutenants.” Vulpes sat straighter. Lieutenants meant that there were multiple options. It was a slim sliver of hope that even he might have a chance. “The Courier has bought me three or four more years, Gods willing so I have the luxury of time. What I lack is an heir and as each of you are competent as leaders you lack only one thing. Legacy. The first man to produce a viable heir will become Caesar.”

“Easy, my slaves are already seeded regularly. You may as well accept me.” Sneered Lanius. “Besides Lucius and his wife are barren.”

“According to whom?”

“You've been married how many years and not a brat to your name.”

“We were careful, not all of us want to break our slaves.”

“They are worth little else.” He sneered. “And poor, neglected Vulpes with not a woman or slave to his name.”

Vulpes wanted to scream and shout and beat on Lanius till he was a bloody pulp but instead he kept his infamous neutrality.

“Ah yes, loyal Vulpes. For his actions in securing our new ally I have a fitting reward.”
Six sat in Caesar’s sleeping area actively trying to block out the naked women on his bed and the pickled tumour on the bookshelf. It was worrying her all the shouting, what was so important she couldn't hear? Eventually Caesar returned, his body slave removed his armour and he sat across her in just a tunic. Without his armour he seemed more like the tired old man he was rather than the tyrant she expected.

“You play the game very well.” Complemented Caesar. “Lanius will think twice before making a move on you again and the wine was delicious.”

“Thank you, I've learned that words and actions have a greater effect than guns in this war.”

“Yes, which is why you and I are going to have a frank chat.”

“No bullshitting?”

“I think you've earned it.”

“Alright then.”

“You are aware of our stance on women.” Six nodded. “A woman can never truly hold a rank in the Legion, even one as capable as yourself.”

“It would give the others ideas.”

“Exactly. Our system is the way it is for a reason. As such, you cannot continue to remain as you are.”

“A free woman?”

“No, unmarried and with rank.”

“Oh.”

“Normally I would wait until the strip is won and give you to my best lieutenant as a reward. However you have reminded me of my mortality.”

“So you're marrying me off?”

“Yes, that is my intention. I have set the men the condition that the first to produce an heir to the throne will be my successor.”

“Vulpes.” She stated. “Only him.”

“Vulpes?”

“Yes.”

“He is my only lieutenant without slave or wife. He is extremely loyal despite the slights dealt to him by the others and is of a good breeding age. However he and his men are the weakest. I was thinking Lucius. He doesn’t want to ruin his pretty wife.”

“So what? He can ruin me instead? No thank you. Vulpes or I walk away.”

“Why him? He is the cruellest and most hated of my men. None of the slaves will even stay in the room with him if they can.”
“He is the only one suitable to lead this rabble. Lucius is too weak, Lanius will use up all the men and run it into the ground. Vulpes would make them love him and secure the desert in the long term.”

“You truly think so.”

“Yes. Besides he’s the only one of them I don’t find repulsive. What does Vulpes think?”

“That you will be a fine wife and he is grateful for the bone I have thrown him.” Caesar sighed.

“Think of it as a political marriage, you are still a free woman, but he will guide you and lead you. He can send you on missions and use your skills how he pleases. I care less on whether he breeds you are not.”

“Alright, I accept with some conditions.”

“I’m listening.”

-------

Vulpes paced the empty tent restlessly. Caesar’s order to marry Six should have made him ecstatic. She was a fine woman and a worthy wife. He had intended to ask for her as a war prize as the thing that was growing grown between them was something legitimate. But having her given to him as a bride because of Caesar's stipulation did not sit right with him. She wouldn't be choosing him. Caesar wouldn’t give her a choice. For him, it meant his choice was taken away again. He took a deep breath, he should be happy. His wife was a fine woman and at least she did not regard him with fear. Any children they made would be intelligent and of a high calibre. For a moment he let himself get caught up in the fantasy of a mutual marriage. Waking to her smile, trusting in another person and raising his children in his image. It was a heady dream and one he doubted would ever come true.

Eventually Six and Caesar exited the tent, she looked agitated but at least she hadn’t slit Caesar’s throat.

“A deal has been struck and we are of an accord. On the full moon you will be wed. No sex before then.” He winked although Vulpes found no humour in his statement.

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Six couldn’t decide whether she was happy or disappointed. She always knew she couldn't rise to a military rank, but... I shouldn't complain at least I had a choice. She had chosen Vulpes, inside she wanted to leap for joy. She enjoyed his company and knew together they could achieve great things. But when she saw him in the tent, she could see his disappointment and dejection. He must not have wanted her after all.
Gritting her teeth through Caesar’s vulgar comment they walked back to his tent in silence. She was unsure how to approach Vulpes; she wasn’t even sure there was anything that could be done. Once back in his tent she began to pack her things.

“Already running?” asked Vulpes bitterly.

“No. But I can tell you are not happy.”

“I am happy, the Courier is going to be my wife and we will have a son and I will be Caesar. What do I not have to be happy about?” he spat out. “My future is coming up rosy.”

“You’re angry.”

“Yes. Yes I am.” Six thought about why, she knew he had ambition and this would further it…”So you just agreed to Caesar’s plan? Just like that? What deal did he offer you to take me as your husband?”

“Deal? There was no deal, not about whom anyway.” she sat on his bed opposite him across the room.

“What?”

“He explained I cannot remain unmarried and hold a rank. So I would have to take a husband.”

“And you just jumped to his order? I thought profligates hated losing their freedom.”

Six frowned still confused by his hostility.

“I made a choice.”

“Well I didn’t.”

Ah. That was the point.

“Caesar didn’t ask you.”

“No. He didn’t.”

“Shit.”

“That would describe it, pretty shit.” he walked to his dresser and swigged a shot of whiskey. “I chose not to have a wife, to not take a slave and now I have one thrust upon me and told to breed if I want power to protect my men.” he drank some more. “Not only that I didn’t choose the woman and she didn’t likely choose me either. I told you, I never wanted an unwilling woman.”

“But Vulpes…”

“But nothing!” he raged. “I will not go against Caesar, but do not pretend you wanted this. This attraction of ours was a mutual action but marriage?”

“I chose you!” she shouted and he backed down unsure. She realised then he was afraid and anxious. Things were out of control and he was lost. She pressed him back into his seat sitting on his lap. Though tense he didn’t resist. She just needed him to listen. “I chose you.” Six fiddled with her pip-boy, the audio function crackling to life. She fast forwarded to the relevant part. “Please.” she asked gently. “Listen.”
He was mortified. Not only had he lost his temper but shown his vulnerability to a known enemy. When she had guided him to the chair he let her knowing it may be the last chance he could have to feel her. She wrapped him in an embrace as a recording began to play. He recognised her higher pitched voice and the other...it was Caesar.

“Vulpes.” he heard her say. “Only him.” he listened carefully till it came to further negotiations and she shut it off. How much could he believe her?

“I chose you Vulpes. I know you may not have chosen me, and I’m sorry for that. As much as we are being forced, I am happy to become your wife and I want this. I chose it and you.”

“The conditions.”

“What about them?”

“What were they?” he watched her mental debate. Knowing she had made the choice eased some of the knots in his chest but not entirely. “Be honest. Please.”

“Number 1: The Frumentarii get the same quality rations as Lanius’ men. Two; If I should become pregnant I can go to New Vegas and the doctors there to ensure both the baby and I survive childbirth.” she blushed. “Three; any child born between us is ours to raise, regardless of gender.”

“Why?”

“Why what?” he held her firm against him when she tried to scoot away.

“I told you, I am happy being your wife and what comes with it. But I don’t want to die for something I know is preventable. If we are to have children I want more than one and I want to be the one who raises them. I’ll be fucked if the end up near Lanius. Why are you looking at me like that? It’s embarrassing. I know.” she wriggled on his lap trying to break free of his grip, but he held firm.

“You did that for us? For my men? For our children?”

“Yes.”

He swallowed, his tongue feeling heavy in his throat. She had chosen him, thought about their partnership. He knew she held feelings for him but the situation was still...complex. He wanted to believe her, but he knew trusting others usually led to betrayal.

“I can’t.” he replied finally. “I can’t right now.”

“I understand.” she smiled weakly. “How about this? I need to go back to the Strip. It’s still two weeks until the full moon. How about we take a break and meet three days before back in the Ultra-Luxe? If you want to give our union a shot, meet me in our booth. If you don’t then I’ll understand and avoid coming back.”

“Caesar will send assassins.”

“Let him. I told him clearly, it was you or nothing.”
“Alright. I agree. Ultra-Luxe in 11 days.”

“You know how to reach me.” she removed herself from his embrace.

“I never did see what matched the garter belt.” he laughed weakly, he felt like he would shatter if he didn’t find solid ground. Six chuckled weakly shouldering her bag.

“I’ll save them for the Ultra-Luxe.” she smiled. “And our hopeful reunion.” she pressed a gentle kiss to his lips and he wanted to yield and lose himself to her touch. But she was right, they would drown in each other if they didn’t separate. As she left he realised his face was wet, he wasn’t crying, it was only as the light of her teleportation faded away he realised they were hers.

Chapter End Notes

I hope you enjoyed reading and I must say this chapter took a turn I wasn't really expecting! I had a completely different end and tone but this turned out to be better. Well I think it did, not sure Vulpes and Six would agree.
11 Days...

Chapter Notes

11 days for Vulpes to choose.
11 days for Six to worry.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

When Six arrived back on the strip she managed to keep her composure until the heavy blast doors bolted shut behind her. She thanked her lucky stars that House was dead. She didn't need an audience for her misery. The ride to the presidential suite seemed longer than before, she turned to say something witty forgetting she was alone once more. No more witty retorts or reassurance. 11 days... the doors pinged open to her floor. She tossed her backpack into the bedroom and began to unzip her dress. Not caring where it fell she let it drop to the floor stepping out of her lace underwear, her special treat no longer making her feel powerful. Still she carefully undis them and folded them for washing. Hopefully she could use them again in 11 days.

-----

Vulpes carefully stored his armour. Only a fool mistreated their armour and he had a feeling he would be needing it sooner rather than later. He allowed himself one last drink before dragging himself to the Frumentarii’s training area with his machete in hand. He had some anger to work out. The logs they practiced their swings against were fresh, only the bark had been carved away so far. He started slow practicing his swing and ensuring his muscles warmed up evenly. Each blow glanced against the log but soon it built in intensity. He hit harder and harder. Sweat dripped from his body and despite warming up he could feel the muscles in his back begin to ache. Yet still he felt unfulfilled. When he would pause, he would think of her lips as she admired his form, desire and hunger in her eyes. Or he would think of how good she felt in his arms and how empty his bed seemed now. 11 days was a long time. But he was Vulpes Inculta. He would survive.

-----

“Hello! Hi there! How are you today?”

“Hello Yes Man.” replied Six rather flat. “Same as before.” she scoffed another Fancy Lads Snack Cake. It was her fifth box.

“Well far be it from me to criticise no ma’am but perhaps we could talk about what to do now that the Legion are out?”

“I haven’t said they are yet.”
“Of course silly old me. It’s just that you’ve been here a lot and not that it isn’t swell to have you around but perhaps there is something more productive to be done?”

“Am I annoying you Yes Man?”

“Nooooo no. No. Of course not! I mean you’ve only clogged my keyboard and spilt Nuka Cola everywhere but I love having you around. You’re like my own personal pet!”

“Sweet lord.” mumbled Six. “Alright, I get the message.” she stuffed another cake in her mouth. “Perhaps I’ll go clean out Vault 3 then.”

“Sure thing! You’re the boss! You show those Raiders who’s in charge!”

Perhaps killing some Vipers would make a difference.

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“For the love of god Vulpes. Let me rest.” moaned Max heading to the bucket for a drink of water. “Gods above man. It’s been 5 days already and even the men are noticing you’re wound too tight.”

“Are you going to keep bitching? I can find another training partner.”

“No, you won’t. They all value their fingers.” Max frowned. “Seriously. They are concerned Vulpes.”

“Well their concern is not needed.” he snarled. “I don’t want anyone’s pity.”

“No one is. To be honest we’re all confused. Getting the Courier as your wife is a great honour for all of us. All of the men know how hard you both worked and the glory you brought us. Why are you unhappy?”

“I’m not.”

“Fine, pissed like a cat in a bath. But the point stands. I saw you both together, I thought you would be happy. What went wrong?”

“Because the choice was not my own. Caesar ordered it.”

“And?”

“I wanted to have the choice. I made the choice to take no slaves before. Yet the choice on marriage was taken away from me.”

“What about Six? I imagine she would find it harder.”

“No.”

“No what?”

“She didn’t find it hard. She agreed and even negotiated extra conditions.”

“How can you be sure?”
“She played me a tape. She asked for me specifically and the things she negotiated…”

“It sounds ideal.”

“It is...was...I don’t know. But I am angry and unsure.” he sighed dropping the machete and sitting down. “We are separated to work things out.”

“Meaning you’re being stubborn.”

“I am not.”

“A gorgeous woman was willing to marry you, despite knowing that you have done despicable acts. She laughs at your jokes and she makes you smile and was willing to warm your bed.”

“When you say it like that it does sound infantile.”

“No shit. But if you’re having doubts perhaps I could have her instead?”

“Get your ass back in the ring.”

--------

Six had purged the vault within the day. The adventure had yielded some good salvage and a fresh supply of snacks and fast food. After selling off what she didn’t need she returned to the 38 but was chased out by Yes Man’s incessant nagging disguised as compliments. Eventually she had ended up at the Atomic Wrangler but got tired of that as well.

She was lonely. Goddamn that fox for making her care. That night she burned the Omertas weapons cache and killed those involved in the snuff ring.

The next day she packed her bag and left for the desert.

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“Vulpes.” the sound of her voice was like a siren, melodic and drawing him closer. Six stood at the base of his bed, body clad in thin silk of the purest white. She looked ethereal. She wore no makeup or jewellery for she needed none to emphasise her beauty. The thin gauzy fabric teasing the pink of her nipples and her lack of underclothes. “Sleeping again?” she chuckled, he felt himself smile in return also. “Perhaps I can wake you up?” she purred undoing the bow that held the fabric together. It fell away like a cascade and he felt his mouth run dry. She was breathtaking. He watched affectionately as she climbed up the bed towards him. His fingers twitched eager to run over her breasts. Her hair was loose and so soft to the touch. It tickled his chest as she stopped her legs straddling his thighs. Where their bodies met was a scorching heat, her cunt already wet. Her slick coated his cock as she ground against his length. “Oh it seems I have your attention?” she smiled wickedly. His hands held her hips in a rough embrace desperate to not lose contact with her. She leaned forward adding more delicious friction to his cock. Her hair falling around them like a cascade, blocking off the world like a curtain. There was nothing but Vulpes and Six. “What
say you husband? Are you awake?” he growled pulling her into a passionate kiss. Her nails raked down his chest, before cupping his face as he mirrored her. Both desperate for more. He moaned lewdly as she rolled against him her slick providing delicious pleasure. He wanted to show more finesse, more delicacy, but when she trailed her lips down his chest he was lost.

He rolled them till she was pinned to the bed, his hands holding hers trapped against the sheet. She arched desperate to touch him but he held firm, mouth descending on her neck kissing and marking her flawless skin. Marking her as his. She pleaded and begged for more, more of him, more of his touch and he burned with his need for her. Six dragged him into a kiss once more, he didn’t remember when he released her hands as she explored his skin. He rubbed and teased and grabbed at her breasts with little finesse admiring how well they fit his hands. He squeezed and tugged at her nipples, his tongue soothing his marks as she writhed against him. His hips rubbing unconsciously against her dripping slit. So easily he could slip inside her. It would be so easy, just a roll of his hips and he would be buried to the hilt.

“Vulpes.” she moaned. “I want you...so much...”

“I want you too.” he growled. Her smaller hand snaked between them lining him up to her entrance. Just a little more and they would be whole.

“I need you.” SIx kissed him lovingly, her arms wrapped around him, holding him as her thighs gripped his side. They were entwined as he pressed forward, her tight heat driving his pleasure higher as she gripped him like a vice. “I love you...”

Vulpes woke with a start, sweat cooling on his skin as he tried to slow his rapid breathing. It was a dream. A good dream. She isn't here. He reminded himself, the warmth quelled by cold. Why wasn't she there? But he knew the answer. He felt slick and checked his boxers. The telltale stickiness adding to his mortification.

Three more days.

Six dressed slowly on the eleventh day. She had already spoken to Marjorie and the booth where this had all started was booked and clear for them all night. In a neat little pile were her silk underwear and stockings and her three choices of dress. Her navy dress that she had worn previously, a black dress that hugged her figure like an hourglass and one similar to her red dress. She wanted to dress to impress unsure of how much she had to persuade him. However, a part of her wanted to make sure that it was his choice not hers. The last dress returned to the wardrobe.
The navy or the black? She mused on it, but decided on the black for fear of the navy invoking memories from that night. At least everything would match.

She hadn't dared to ask Alerio if Vulpes had left the Fort. She knew it took them three days to get there he would perhaps need two at most? If he hadn't have left by now there was no way he'd be there. Since she ‘accidentally’ set fire to the Legions weapons in Gomorrah she was also fearful she was an enemy, whereas in fact she just disliked the management.

With her outfit decided, she hung it up on the wardrobe. She hadn't slept the previous night the anxiety already rooted in her gut and the clock on her pip-boy read only 12pm. She lay down on the bed and grasped around her bedside table for her book. She could bother Yes Man again but he would spend the time trying to convince her to take over New Vegas again. There were only so many times you could explain you didn't care for it. Eventually he might persuade her by nagging too much.

*Six hours to go...* she sighed. *Six hours till heartbreak or happiness.*

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*Gods damn this place.*

Once more he stepped onto the strip and once more he had the distinct feeling of being unclean. Once more he had donned plain armour and walked into the desert. Only Max knew where he was really headed. He had made sure he wore different armour than what she was familiar with. The securitrons were still active and he didn't want them tattling back to the lodger in the lucky 38. Besides he was still uncertain whether or not they'd shoot him on sight. He'd heard tales of profligate women unleashing fury on their men; he didn't want to test her mood.

Vulpes had departed for the strip the same day as his dream. In a moment of clarity in the cold, empty tent he truly felt the loneliness of his station and his own self imposed isolation. It stung that they had not chosen for themselves but at least they would have each other. He knew then that he could remain no longer. His tent and life was missing a vital courier-shaped part. He had packed and left determined and arrived in record time.

Now he was stood in front of Mick and Ralph’s with only a few hundred caps to his name and a new suit. What had drawn him to the window was foolhardy at best and pathetic. Yet it was flight of fancy and perhaps a childish notion. Gold bands sat in the window. A pre-war relic and symbol almost pointless now, but for the romantics in the desert, they would come for miles to get a little piece of luck. Maybe that was all that he needed.

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Six placed back and forth, it was almost time. She was afraid but hopeful. She rouged her lips and tucked a gun into a pocket of her bag. *It always paid to be prepared.*
Vulpes swirled the amber contents of his glass in a clockwise pattern. The heavy liquid coated the bottom of the glass. His leg constantly twitched. Before he could sit for hours in quiet silence almost unnaturally still. Now, it was as if his body held boundless energy. He rocked the small velvet box on the table. He was being foolish and began tapping the box uneasily but soon he grew tired of that. Oh how his mentor would frown on him as he swapped the box for a drink and hastily organised another. At least with the Ultra-luxe the service was swift another glass placed on the table.

Again nervous energy began to make him fidget. Gods above was it always so difficult to sit still? He waited and checked the clock she should be here anytime soon. He tried to sit up but found his body would not respond. *Shit. Shit! Shit!* He had forgotten the simple check. Three men slid into the booth. Two in front, one by his side. All wearing Ultra-luxe uniform.

“How nice of you to join us for dinner this evening Mr. Inculta.”

Six checked in her jacket but kept her weapons, the last time she was here she was forced to use them and that prospect didn't amuse her. The patrons were chatting aimlessly, the noise and hubbub just like any other evening. But for Six it felt like the endless desert with her destination uncertain.

She focused on the floor afraid that if she looked up she would find the seat empty already. Currently, she held back the tide of anxiety that was eroding her defenses. But still she headed forwards. She signalled the bartender who dug out her usual purified water. She paused and took a steadying breath before taking the last steps up to her booth.

It was empty.

The only sign anyone had been there was a small black box and an envelope. Six pulled the objects closer noticing the box was well worn but padded, something precious lay within it. The corner was slightly flattened as if it had been repeatedly hit on its edge. Was the person who left it nervous?

She lifted the envelope noting that it wasn't very thick. Perhaps a single piece of card or paper, the edge only tucked in. It was most likely something innocent rather than classified as it was displayed publicly. Six noted that the handwriting was confident and neat. It was someone who wrote regularly. Most wastelanders could write but it was often shaky or childish because who had time for penmanship? But this person was neat. They practiced. Vulpes could easily have written it. With unsteady hands she opened the envelope. A single tan coloured piece of paper, the cleanest paper you could get after the apocalypse, was contained within.

*You are cordially invited to dinner.*
We will be serving a three course dinner of long pork freshly prepared this very evening. The chef has called his masterpiece “The Feast of the Fox.”

Your attendance is expected and a greeter will meet you at the entrance to the sewer in North Vegas Square.

Cordially yours,

Moriarty.

Six frowned, Moriarty? It all came back in a sickening blur. The concierge. He had gone to ground after they freed the Gunderson kid. A Feast of the Fox… No…it couldn't be...

Six opened the box, the internal silk was discoloured yellow from centuries. The pure shine of two gold bands lay within. One thicker than the other. Carefully she pulled out the bands, they were so light in her hand and smooth.

Please let it be someone else...

The interior of the bands were rough something. Carefully engraved. On the first, smaller one was inscribed 'My Venus’ the other read 'My Fox’.

Six dismissed the drink and ran back to the cloakroom. She prayed Vulpes had stayed at home, she prayed he didn't choose her. She prayed that the rings weren't his.

Chapter End Notes

Thank you for reading! I hope you enjoyed it and their evolving story!
"Where the fuck is Max?" Yelled Six materialising in the centre of the Frumentarii camp. The men stepped back from her, shocked still by her teleportation ability. "Where is he?" She snapped storming towards the command tent. If Vulpes was here, he was likely to be in his tent. Without waiting for an invitation she entered hoping he'd be at his desk irritated she didn't wait to be asked. But it was dark and empty. Clearly unused for a few days.

"Six? What the fuck is going on?"

"Vulpes!" She shouted. "Where is he?" Max looked confused. "Tell me he is with Caesar!" She shouted again. She could hear her voice breaking. "Tell me he chose to stay here!" She smacked against his chest. "Please…" she cried.

"Vulpes left days ago for New Vegas. He told me he was going to meet you."

"No." Her voice "no, no, no, no, no."

"What?" Max demanded. "What has happened?" She shoved the invite into his chest. He read it quickly his own curses following. "When did you get this?"

"About 10 minutes ago. I had to be sure."

"Who is this Moriarty?"

"The cannibal concierge."

"Shit!" he swore.

"You got non-legion armour?"

"Always."

"Want to be my plus one?"

-----
He knew he shouldn't have let Vulpes leave by himself. He knew the man was agitated but to let himself be captured by a cannibal? If Vulpes survived the night Max would probably kill him himself. He grabbed his armour from his tent and changed rapidly. Six was pacing back and forth in front of the tent growling at any Frumentarii who came near. He grabbed his knife and machete and jogged back to her side.

“I don't have a gun.”

“Well I need to get changed first.” She grabbed his arm and the world went white. At first he was disoriented, the ground felt like the ground but all he could taste was metal and smell burning. “Come on!” Six ran into the iconic casino.

If he was not so concerned with his friend’s safety he would have taken longer to appreciate the décor and ambience. Being allowed in the Lucky 38 was a rare honour, he'd ask for the grand tour later. Six was already stripping out of her dress as she stepped out of the lift.

“No time for modesty,” she pointed to a trunk by the base of the bed, “Guns are in there, melee shit is over there.”

He grunted in response and went straight to work he didn't want Vulpes kicking his ass if he found out Max has seen her naked. _That's if he is still alive…_ no, he was definitely going to live. Quickly he opened the trunk and was met by an extensive array of guns, all maintained and looking almost brand new. He spotted Bessie and chose the familiar weapon before going through her melee collection. There were rippers and machetes and _was that a deathclaw fist?_ He selected a machete with a reasonable sharp edge as Six clearly didn't favour these.

“Here pick yourself some grenades.” She ordered before dragging out another case and counting out ammo. He noted she was in heavy recon combat armour; stronger and more reinforced than any he had seen her wear prior. As he picked his grenades, Six moved to the trunk and started pulling out guns. Maria was already on the bed but a shotgun and grenade launcher swiftly followed along with a large missile shaped object.

“What is that?” He asked unable to quell his curiosity.

“Mini-nuke. If Vulpes is dead I’m going to level the whole place and then the Ultra-luxe.”

“And the grenade launcher?”

“In case negotiations break down.”

“Fair enough.”

When they headed back out into the crisp night air they were prepared for war. Vulpes would have fought if able to and if from what Six had said there was no sign of a fight. Either way, the Frumentarii were coming for their leader back.
They made record time to the Square, despite being overloaded with enough weaponry to service a small army. As they drew close the normal players on the street were decidedly absent. Either tipped off or sensing the shitstorm that was about to hit. She indicated where they were going and kept her gun drawn while Max followed suit. The usual friendly giant replaced by a man with a steel backbone and murder in his eyes. They walked in side by side. There was little cover to the sewer manhole but there was also not many places for the enemy to hide. The only thing that stood out was a single chair placed by the manhole with a person sitting on it. But it was hard to tell if they were a threat or not.

Cautiously they edged forward. Max focused on the rear and above while Six concentrated on the front and sides. But there was nothing, not even a peep from the flats. Clearly they were all aware of the danger that night. As they got closer to the figure they noted it's arms were on the rest and there was no guns. Six fiddled with the dials on her pip-boy and the light flared to life. She soon wished she hadn't.

“Poor bastard.” Muttered Max.

The body was lashed to the chair with rough rope, not to restrain but to ensure it sat upright. The flesh was missing on the majority of the carcass, rough gouges and scrapes on the bone suggested they had been butchered in terms of gaining meat rather than savagery. A letter was tied to the corpse. The envelope was stained with blood and had clearly been there a while. A loop of twine tied it to the sternum. Six untied and freed the letter recognising the similar handwriting from before.

Welcome, welcome! I am afraid my concierge is not nearly as vocal or theatrical as myself but they were kind enough to provide some much needed entertainment.

Come in, sweet Courier. Save your fox. If you can, that is.

I will be waiting on baited breath and nursing an empty stomach.

Regards, Moriarty.

“That fucker!” She yelled, Max snatching at the paper.

“Shit!” He hissed.

“No survivors Max. I want every single one dead. With added violence where possible.”

“Gladly Six, gladly.”
Everything was dark, and he ached. His mouth fuzzy and tongue felt numb.

_Drugged, some Frumentarii I am._

Vulpes found he had some movement returned to him but his arms were bound above him and his feet didn't touch the ground. He wriggled trying to unhook himself but he was still lethargic. The moment Moriarty sprung his trap was still vivid. He only hoped Six believed he hadn't shown up rather than follow him into this pit. His stomach felt like lead knowing that no-one would come and that she would be sat there waiting.

He didn't know how much time passed in the dark, but he spent it thinking of her, of his achievements and determining he had little to regret. Despite his strength slowly beginning to return it was not long enough as there was a sound of a key in the door.

“Ahhh Mr. Fox, you’re awake. Wonderful!”

“Moriarty, I thought you would have fled after the cannibalism thing fell through.”

“How could I when the perpetrators of that travesty are still at large.”

“You brought it on yourself.”

“And you brought this on yourself.” The other man grinned wickedly. “Gentlemen.” Vulpes fought in his bonds as a group of well dressed men walked into the room, well technically fridge. Each man held a weapon such as canes, bats and knuckle dusters and Vulpes knew where this was heading. “Gentlemen, the chef requires that the meat be tenderised. Please make sure it is done thoroughly.”

It was at that moment Vulpes knew he was going to die.

“Stop her!” Yelled a guard, the sound of machine gunfire echoing off the walls of the sewer. Max and Six had taken refuge behind some rubble and she was slowly picking off the resistance. Max was on standby with the shotgun taking out anyone who tried to get around to their flank.

“Oh fuck this.” Cursed Six. Dropping her backpack to the ground she left the defence to Max pulling out parts and slotting together her grenade launcher. Loading a 40mm round she tapped Max before launching a trio of grenades. Sensing an opportunity Max charged forward knocking back the last few. Six followed suit dispatching those who were still alive with a simple medicinal bullet.

With the front door metaphorically kicked in, the two pressed forward into the cannibal’s den.
Max pressed ahead, he was a larger target but at least he could be a shield for Six. She protested at first, trying to squeeze past him but he held firm. He may have lost his friend, but he wouldn't let harm come to Six either. The tunnel began to split into rooms and corridors. They took each one carefully, but found little bar molerats and the odd guard. As they reached the end of the tunnel opened up into a larger room. It had grates for extra drainage but was like a large tank with a table was set in the middle of the room. There were no guards in the room but she could still hear shouting from the other doors.

“Which direction?” She asked him. He surveyed the doors, a wrong direction could be fatal. Six went and pressed the buttons in desperation leaving them vulnerable. “Two side rooms but they extend back… or another tunn…”

“…oh Sweet Courier…” a speaker crackled. “A tad early to dinner. You even brought a guest.” Six stormed ahead shouting at the speakers. He quickly crushed the skull of the man pinned beneath him before chasing after her. He had seen that look in people before; blind engulfing rage. It was not going to take her. He wouldn’t let it.

Max caught up easily wrapping an arm around her and dragged her kicking and screaming into a side room.

“Let me go you fucker!” She screamed kicking and rolling. “He needs me! Let go! They’ll kill him.” It was moments like this that wondered why Caesar wanted women weak. If the Courier charged him now he’d be terrified.

“I know! I KNOW!” He shouted holding her tight. “I know! But he wouldn’t want you to get yourself killed. We both know that.” She went limp in his arms. “I am angry too Six. Angry at him and them. But we have to keep our wits, otherwise we are weak ones.” He heard her sniff.

“He chose me Max.” She cried. “He came back for me. He came back for me and they took him.”

“I know. I know. But if we charge in we could all die. What would he do?” He released her and she stood limply as if the resistance drained out of her.

“He would assess and adapt.”

“Exactly. So we’ve assessed there is another room where the dick is broadcasting. How do we adapt?”

“Teamwork and violence.”

Six begrudgingly acknowledged that Max was right. Her rage was clouding her judgement but it
was hard to fight it. Not when things were out of her control once more. She just couldn't surrender now.

“Let me lead.” Ordered Max.

“You move too slow.”

“But at least we aren't dead.”

“But he might be.”

She watched Max think through his options. The friendly face impassive.

“All right Six. You can lead but, no running ahead.”

Six checked her ammunition, loading fresh bullets before pressing onward. The halls began to twist and change. The walls were painted with body parts suspended on pikes. **Savage**. They crept closer still; the message clear to avoid the place or end up like bag of scrap and bone.

Moriarty left an invitation in the shape of a dismembered arm pointing up a shaft carved out from under a building. They climbed through finding themselves in the bottom of a warehouse that had been converted into a madman’s den.

The room was dark and spacious. Carcasses hung from the rafters in varying states of decay; some as if they were being dried for jerky. The centre of the room held a large dining table similar to what she saw in the Ultra-luxe. A throne was illuminated by candles. In fact candles were the only light in the room. Six turned on her pip-boy light. The green light dazzling both her and the man with the axe. Six shouted using her shotgun to block the axe blow kicking her attacker in the gut.

“Fucking whore.” Snarled the man as she swung the butt of her gun forced the man back and creating space. She fired a shot but he rolled out of the way. She moved with him but was tackled by another and the gun was knocked from her hands. Six clawed and bit at the man who had her pinned he relaxed and she scrambled away but he wouldn’t give up. She grabbed her pig-sticker stiletto and jabbed for his neck. The pig squealed as her mark held true. Six struggled to get loose by the time her original attacker was up. She shouted for Max but heard a grunt in response. He had his own problems. She crawled forward grabbing the shotgun but got a kick to her ribs in response.

“Try not to damage her too much. Cook wants to inspect her.” Called a familiar voice.

Six rolled away trying to think of a way out. But the familiar click of a pistol being drawn sealed her fate.

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Max was bloodied and sore. The fuckers used serrated blades and carved him up well. He had switched to a machete to make it fair. The first guard fell like a doll. Pathetic. The next attacked
him two against one. They exchanged blows when he heard Six scream. She was unarmed and struggling against a larger man. *Shit.*

Max had two options, take a blow and save the girl or keep fighting and let her sort it out.

*Why did he have to be such a gentleman?*

---

*Shit shit shit. If she could only get Maria out.*

Max roared startling her attacker. She kept the man pressed away long enough to snake a free hand to her holster and grabbed Maria shooting through the holster into the man's guts. Shoving him away she stood to aid Max but the Legionary was a beast by nature. The machete buried in the neck of one of attacker with the others dead on the ground. It wasn't until he turned she saw the gash across his chest.

“*Shit!*” She dashed to his side. “*I'm sorry!*” She hissed, diving through her bag for her medical tin.

Max knelt down holding the wound shut, he tried to protest there was no point, but that was not an option. “*Mind the pain.*” She announced and jabbed a stimpack in the centre of the wound. It would begin to knit the internal damage while the second she administered would close it up.

“I didn't ask for your medicine.” He growled.

“Neither did I, but as I told him. If I can heal him I will. Now let's get going. You just had my spare medicine and I get the feeling Vulpes will need the rest.” she pressed his hand against the closing wound ensuring he kept his innards inside.

“Perhaps we should bring the showpiece in!” announced Moriarty over the speaker. “*Et Voila!* It’s still a little raw, but I’ve been told that the secret is in tenderising the meat and waiting to the very last minute to slaughter the beast. It makes it so fresh and succulent upon cooking.”

A large spotlight shone into the room illuminating a doorway where tied to a silver platter was the goal of her quest.

“*Vulpes.*” she whispered, but he was so still. The light was blinding but as her eyes adjusted she could see why he didn’t fight. Bruises covered his entire body. In fact it was like his entire body was one bruise. She watched frozen as they brought him forward, she looked for the tell-tale sign of his chest rising and falling but it was either too weak or non-existent. Six snarled and began to storm ahead as they placed Vulpes on a table. She heard Max shuffle behind her but her focus was entirely on Vulpes. Moriarty laughed as he flicked a switch raising grates around the table. Once more she was blocked off but at least she could shoot him through the hole.

“Uh uh uh!” taunted Moriarty drawing a long bowie knife from his jacket. It’s blade looked sharp
and highly polished. He ran the blade down Vulpes chest in warning. “Toss your gun through the grate Courier.” Six wanted to resist but Moriarty pressed down near his throat and her heart almost stopped. “Don’t tempt me dearest.”

“Fine.” she snarled. Worst came to it, she still had the grenade launcher. She slotted Maria through the grate.

“Empty the shells.” he ordered Max, who followed direction. “What a fine night this is!” cheered Moriarty. “Almost like the night you ruined me.”

“You knew the others wouldn’t approve.” she hissed. “Besides, you had someone who could have made me a lot of money.”

“Of course, that wretched boy. Well, you took something dear from me. I felt it only fair I did the same.”

“He’s just my boss.” she bluffed, clutching at what few straws she had.

“A boss who describes you as Venus?” she snarled at his retort. Moriarty raised the blade above Vulpes heart. She could see his fingers twitch but he was unable to respond. “You know Courier, he waited for you.”

“Six, don’t listen to him.” she heard Max warn his hand resting on her shoulder.

“Oh yes, don’t listen to how he sneaked into the strip so he could surprise you, or how he spent an hour choosing the rings and what to have engraved. Or how he waited not wanting to risk them being taken. Or how he wore a new suit that fit him better. Or how he fidgeted while he watched the doorway for you, keeping the rings tightly in his hand.”

“I will fucking end you Moriarty!” she screamed in impotent rage. He waited and it killed him.

“Not before I end everything you ever wanted.” he replied in cold rage slamming the blade into Vulpes chest. The sick crunch of bone and wet squelch filled the silence in the room as Six screamed and fought against the cage. “Make a choice Courier, me or the Fox?” he lowered the gates before disappearing into the corridor where Vulpes had come from. She scrabbled forward, grabbing at Vulpes had. His face was bruised and already starting to swell, he tried to breathe but it was already difficult.

“DON’T!” she screeched as Max reached for the blade. “It’s slowing the bleed.” she sniffed unaware of the tears down her face.

“S...ix” hissed Vulpes through swollen lips. “Sa...fe.”

“It’s OK.” she choked in reply, hands flying to the straps grabbing her med kit. “Max.”

“Yes?”

“You need to get him outside.” she stated. “Here.” she clipped her pip-boy to his wrist. “Jab him with all the stimpacks and run outside. Hit the red button and it will take you to a doctor. Tell her to make a tab.”

“And you?”

“I’m going hunting.”
Hello, it's been a while. I must say this chapter has been a bitch. Although I'm not 100% happy with it, I don't want to lose momentum and not get to the fun bits. I'll probably be coming back to it later to edit or expand. One more week of the school year to go so more time for writing.

Also there are 3 points of view. Max, Vulpes and Six.

Running off was probably the stupidest thing Six could have done, but she couldn't allow Moriarty to live. If he survived there was no way they would ever be left in peace. Max tried to call her back, but she ignored him, not even bothering to acknowledge she had heard. If she looked back now it was more than likely she would cave in.

Moriarty had disappeared behind a thick curtain into a backstage area made up of small rooms. Six checked every one with a quick sweep, her finger near the trigger and fearful of an attack in the rear. Once she was sure it was clear, it left only one room which had only one obvious entrance/exit. She approached, shotgun braced against her shoulder as the door opened and a grenade rolled out.

“Shit!” She cursed jumping aside narrowly missing the full force of the blast. Despite her efforts she hit the wall hard. Her grip on her gun slipped as she was dazed.

“Stupid bitch.” Snarled a male voice, the wet crunching sound of a knee impacting her face filled the corridor. “Not so brave now.” Six managed to squint and see another kick swinging for her head and threw her body down. Drawing Maria, she shot out catching her attacker; making him howl in pain and back away. Six kept one eye opened as the shape retreated to the room once more. She quickly grabbed her shotgun and pursued.

The room was a simple living quarters. The most valuable piece of furniture seemed to be the dining table. But if the occupant was Moriarty that wasn't a surprise. Six scanned the room briefly but Moriarty was a tidy man and all the furniture was against the walls. No corners to hide behind. However the rug had been thrown back revealing a hatch into the tunnels below, the metal cover already tipped back. Six approached cautiously, it was the perfect time for a surprise attack from below. She crouched low and peered over the edge. The dim lights of the tunnel provided little illumination. It was only at the last minute she heard the creak of a floorboard and turned to find Moriarty climbing from under the bed. Six twisted harshly, finger already pulling the trigger as Moriarty threw himself at her. She braced herself for the collision and together they overbalanced falling into the tunnels below. Six twisted as she fell and hit the metal. Everything went black.

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Vulpes felt at peace for the first time in his life. Before, there was always some drive or need that forced him to keep moving for fear of becoming inconsequential. But now, it seemed unimportant as he waited for something more. He didn't know how he arrived in this paradise, Elysium, but he felt no hunger, no desire. He simply felt nothing, not even a flicker of joy or satisfaction. There was still so much work to be done and if he wasn't there someone would fuck it up. He sat looking
upon his well earned paradise and made his choice.

---

Max was not inspired by the Courier's plan. He was a Legion warrior and should have pursued Moriarty, not her. She could barely wield a machete! Yet, he supposed, neither could she carry Vulpes quickly. As he searched for an exit he kept a strong grip on his friend who was beginning to become deathly pale. He followed ancient green signs and used a grenade to blow open an emergency exit affording them a small balcony. It wasn't a very large space but he hoped it was enough as rubble pinned him in.

*Open the interface, press the red button.*

**Confirm New Vegas Medical Clinic?**

He pressed the red button.

---

Six came back to consciousness like a switch being flicked on. Instinct brought her around quick, but injury and gravity reminded her she wasn't immortal. The room spun, everything was blurry and sore. She felt around trying to orientate herself. The floor was metallic and cold to the touch and she could faintly hear the sound of running water and the unmistakable smell of rotting things.

*Sewers?*

Six went to grab a stimpack out of habit but realised that she had none and despite what the Legion thought, healing powder did very little. A low groan beside her brought her back into the moment. Six rolled and screamed something was wrong with her left shoulder. *Dislocated? Most likely.*

Six winced using the other arm to push up from the ground and scrambled around for her gun. As she reached forward for her shotgun a highly polished Oxford brogue stamped on her hand and she grimaced before the boot connected with her face. *Fuck!* Six rolled and crawled in any possible direction.

“Oh how the mighty are fallen.” Chuckled Moriarty. “Though I must thank you for breaking my fall. Please...let me check your ribs.” He mocked kicking hard. Six gasped for air and clutched her ribs and floundered on her back. *Yep definitely something broken.* Six grabbed for Maria as Moriarty lunged for it, but through her pain he pulled it from her grasp.

“You know I’m getting real sick of looking up at that gun.” She choked out, spitting up some blood.

“Well perhaps it's the only thing that really can kill the immortal Courier. It's certainly the only weapon that came close.”

“Worse men than you have tried to kill me.” She hissed spotting the butt of her shotgun and seeing how close it was. “Besides.” She grinned, the metallic taste in her mouth strong. “I'm starting to wonder if I'm immortal myself.” Six began to laugh, she didn't know where it came from but as she lay hurt on the floor of a sewer, staring at a cannibal trying to kill her with the gun that started this whole shitshow. *What a fucking joke.*

Subtly she shifted as her laughter became a mania, but it allowed her to move closer to the shotgun.
“Stop laughing.” ordered Moriarty, she was in full blown hysteria lying on her side. “STOP LAUGHING!” he shot the ground at her feet. Six dropped her expressiveness and regarded him with disdain and defiance. With one good stretch she could grab the shotgun. “Wipe that look of your face.” Moriarty ordered.

“Why? Can't stand to look at the face that you are trying to kill. You are a rather insignificant little shit.” He shot close to her head this time. Six tried to remain as impassive as possible. She thought of how Vulpes deadpanned Boone to irritate him. It seemed it bothered others too. *God I miss Vulpes.*

-------

“ I need a doctor!” Shouted Maximus as he came into the building labelled Clinic.

“I’m sorry without the caps I…”

“Six said you would help.”

“Courier Six?”

“Yes. Please. She gave me her pip-boy it was vital we got here quick. She said to open a tab.”

“Tab? Well at least she pays fucking well. Bring him in. We can do you after.”

*Thank you profligates for your predictable greed.*

-----

“Answer me one question Moriarty.” She sighed, checking her nails indifferently. “Will you be eating me, after you kill me?”

“What?”

“You know, carve up what’s not splattered on the floor and I dunno, add some herbs?” Moriarty didn't reply. “Maybe some butter. I've read it helps the flavour. Though I must say that the person who wrote it probably didn't mean Brahmin butter.”

“Are you being facetious?”

“Nahhh. I read a recipe book. Best way for meat is to boil it in something called a ‘slow cooker’ with some sauce it almost melts off the bone. Or flame grilled with with spices…”

“Why does it matter?”

“Well you know what they say 'waste not, want not.’ Plus I want to know I have some uses.”

“Seriously bitch, I think I should be thanked for ending your kind of crazy.”

Six knew the moment was near. She would either win or die. Moriarty was tense, her badgering taking the wind out of his sails and he kept of fidgeting. In the heat of the moment he would have won but now, now he would made mistakes.

“Thank you.” She replied and lunged for the shotgun. She heard the click of Maria’s hammer but there was no gunshot. She rolled back as Moriarty cursed, the first round from her shotgun missed
as he turned tail and ran Maria forgotten on the floor. Six shot again but the rounds just shattered the brickwork again. “Fuck!” She rolled to her knees and dug through her bag for her radio headset.

“Yes Man?” Six hissed through the headset.

“Well Hi there!”

“Send securitrons to this radio location.”. Six followed Moriarty down the sewer. The cannibal scuttling away ahead as she hobbled after.

“Alrighty! I didn't think you could break a pip-boy!”

“I don't have it, gave it to a man named Maximus who’s a friend of Vulpes. Send a securitron to escort them into the 38 Suite only. Remember the chameleon protocols.”

“Will do boss.”

-----

“How long?”

“I told you, as long as it takes. Six managed to stem the bleeding but in removing the knife it opened it up again. Give the Doctor more time.”

“I don't like it. I thought these miracle drugs worked quickly.”

“They do. But he was beaten and stabbed. There is a lot to do. So I ask you respectfully to sit your ass down and shut the fuck up.”

-----

For a man claiming to be not very injured Moriarty was surprisingly slow. Though watching him duck and weave was very helpful for spotting his traps. Eventually light began to filter through as he neared an exit. She couldn't have him getting away. With a surge of strength she limped quicker. Time to break his legs.

-----

“Max?” The bloodied doctor announced for the doorway of the operating theatre.

“Here!” He tossed the copy of Today's Physician aside and trotted over.

“Your friend will live, though not without some scarring. Six kept him alive long enough but there is no telling the effect on his mind may be. He needs to rest and probably avoid getting stabbed again.”

“That's it? He almost died and you're just saying it's that easy to fix him?”

“Easy but expensive. Six must really like him.” She mused. “At least he's in better nick than the sniper.” The Doctor ushered him in and Vulpes looked no different his skin tone was healthy almost radiant. Only the blood on his shirt was a hint to the violence endured. “Give him a couple of these painkillers for the headache and tell Six to give him a couple of bags of radway before he starts looking ghoulish.”

“Alright.” He replied. How far was he going to allow her to break their rules?
“I’m guessing she’s held up right now but give her this invoice for services rendered. She always pays her debts.” Max opened the small neatly folded piece of paper. He sneaked a peek curious to the cost of saving a man’s life.

“10,000 caps?!” He exclaimed. Surely only the Legion’s state treasury held that sort of cash? A mailwoman surely wouldn’t.

“I’ve already given her the family and friends discount and that’s including treatment for your cute ass. I can be persuaded to add a few stimpacks in.”

“Deal.” he replied. Apparently there was a lot more to the Courier than met the eye.

They were going to have another chat.

----

Six sat on a rock admiring the night sky of the Mojave. The air was cool against her clammy skin and she was cooling down rapidly. She didn’t think it would take so long for Yes Man to find her but then again they were using the low tech equipment.

“Man I could kill for a sandwich.” Six grumbled. “You don’t happen to have a people free sandwich in that jacket do you? I have specific dietary requirements.”

“Fuck you!” spat her captive.

“That’s not very helpful for getting me a sandwich.” she growled. “Less of the grumpiness thank you.”

“Bitch.”

“Cannibal.”

Moriarty sneered and spat on the ground by the bloody stumps of his legs. Apparently a shotgun could stand in for a surgical tool although it wasn’t her most elegant work. She had cauterised the wound with an experimental application of fusion rounds. Something she was not keen to do again.

Six spied movement ahead, the big blocky outline and the temporary smiling face confirming indeed the cavalry had arrived.

“On your feet Mori… oh shit forgot I removed them.” She grinned and he gave her the finger. “Think we need to have a word with your establishment. The service has been terrible.”
Vulpes woke feeling warm and relatively pain free. Six must have used a great deal of medicine to make him that comfortable. Awareness came back in dribs and drabs. He was aware of a soft surface and the feel of fabric against his back. He must be in a bed of some sort. It was uneven as if there was a weight beside him. Thank the Gods, the cannibal hadn't gotten her. When the blows rained down he hoped that she would avoid the same treatment. But, if she hadn't met the cannibal how did he escape? His mind played the flashes before he had blacked out. He remembered her pained scream and the bars that separated them and the gentle touch against his skin as he began to die. *It must be her, she must have made it out.* He wasn't aware of the time that had passed since the blade pierced his chest. It could have been days or even weeks. He had thought of her while he hung awaiting the cooking pot. He had pictured a life with her managing his home as he brought Caesar to victory with Max as his second. He could retire and raise his son to be a great leader and his daughters would learn medicine and espionage from his wife. They would be happy and he would grow old with a legacy to last to the next nuclear war. He could be fulfilled.

His eyelids were still heavy but he hand regained some movement and could feel more and his hand searched for the person beside him. They were warm but he still couldn't be sure of their identity.

“I don't think I’m the person you are hoping for.” Growled a familiar voice.

“Maximus?” he questioned, eyes opening slowly as the light was bright in the room he was staying in. The word was hard to form. His throat was parched and his tongue felt heavy in his mouth.

“The one and only.” he replied. “Fucking Hell Vulpes, you scared us there for a bit.”

“Apologies.” he finally opened his eyes as the light felt less like the sun. “Any water?” the bed creaked as Max got up, he tried to sit up as well but found that the rest of his body was not ready to follow instruction. Max thudded back over and placed something on the side. “A little help?” he asked. “But tell anyone and I will kill you.”

“There, there Vulpes, why would I want to emasculate you in front of your pretty wife?” large hands helped him up to a seated position his back braced against a very familiar bed. “Are we in the Lucky 38?”

“Yes, Jeeves the butler AI let me in, seems Six arranged an escort from the Lucky 38.”

“She did?”

“Yeah, she did.” Vulpes accepted the water and drank greedily. He surveyed his surroundings. It was certainly the couriers room but there was one person missing. “Where is she?”

“Honestly.” replied Maximus who sat next to him on the bed. “I have no idea. We split up when we found you.”

“You mean you let her go after him alone!” he snarled.
“Not willingly. You were bleeding to death in front of me. We had to do something and I tried to stop her I really did.”

“That is not the matter here. Why haven't you gone after her? Surely this butler could track the infernal machine on her arm.” He snapped. He knew Maximus had done what he could for them but the thought of her alone and potentially injured…

“I do believe SIR means her Pip-Boy.” chimed a disembodied voice.

“I do.”

“That would indeed be effective if the Lady of the house hadn't given it to your companion here to save your life.”

“So she’s alone and doesn't have her Pip-Boy and you let her follow a cannibal?” he accused Maximus.

“Still saved your life.”

“Fuck you. You best hope she comes through that door.”

“Why do you think I’m sitting here with the door open. I'm hoping she sees you first and forgets me. I have strong survival reflexes.”

“Think you can go before before me as a human shield? I get the feeling I’m in her bad books too.”

“Oh fuck no.” chuckled Max. “How is your head? Need more medicine?”

“That almost sounded natural.” Vulpes replied. “When did you become comfortable with medicine?”

“I’ll have you know that I read a whole copy of Today’s Physician. I am what you call an intellectual.”

Vulpes chuckled again, Max always knew how to cheer him up with his wit. Still it was almost dawn and Six had still not returned. “What time did you separate?”

“No later than 10? I didn't really look. It was before midnight.”


“I have them.”

“How?”

“He left them for her to find with an invitation to eat you for dinner.” Vulpes didn't reply. “May I suggest grovelling?”
“Yes Man.” Six spoke into the headset. “Send securitrons into the strip, go and wake Marjorie, Swank and Big Sal and have them meet me outside the Ultra-luxe. Tell them it is mandatory.” The gates of the strip were lit ahead always neon despite the rising sun. Revellers and tourists lined the streets and stared at her as she stood at the doorway. Rather, they stared at footless Moriarty who hung between two securitrons. “Drop him.” She ordered and true to form the robots dropped the cannibal like a sack of bricks. “Get walking Moriarty.” She ordered.

“No feet bitch.”

“Crawl bitch.” she pointed ahead with her shotgun and waited. Six could have had Moriarty carried to the strip and had a Securitron carry her home. But no, Six had a message to send and she was gonna make sure they would listen. Six stomped on the stump of his left foot when he still hadn’t moved. She hadn't dulled his nerves with Med-x so the primal howl the tore through Freeside was 100% genuine and Six smiled. Vulpes had taught her a valuable lesson. Presentation was key.

-----

“Sirs, apologies for disturbing your rest but I thought you might like to know the Lady of the house has returned to the strip.”

“Where is she exactly? Is she alright?”

“The Courier seems to be injured and rather bloodied. May I suggest preparing some stimpacks? However her companion is faring rather worse for ware.”

“Companion?”

“Yes a rather well dressed man. However it seems he is missing his feet.” Jeeves paused as the men hung on tender hooks. “She has him crawling before her as she follows. She has gathered quite a crowd and is heading to the Ultra-luxe.” Vulpes smirked, she had been learning. “It seems she has gathered a crowd for a speech. Would you like me to run the audio feed into the room?”

“Yes.” Replied Vulpes. “Yes I would.”

----

“Good evening Ladies and Gentlemen.” Six began, “and esteemed guests.” she indicated to the three heads of the family present; Marjorie, Big Sal and Swank. They all looked dishevelled and rumpled like they had been dragged out of bed. Perfect. “Marjorie I believe this sack of shit belongs to you. A cannibal no less.” The crowd gasped on cue. They were easy to lead. “I shut most of ’em down but this roach scurried away biding his time till he thought…” she punctuated with a stomp on his stump. “To interfere with what is mine and that will not do! Not at all!” she snarled and Moriarty whimpered. She hoped that the mix of her own injuries and the fact Moriarty was worse for wear would add the the intimidation and her immortality myth. “This little shit decided that he would try and wipe me off the map. Needless to say it did not work and I am angry.”

“Please Six, you must understand…”
“UNDERSTAND?” she snarled. “What is there to understand Marjorie? He kidnapped MY friend, almost KILLED someone precious to me and had the audacity to try and kill ME. So tell me how I SHOULD understand his actions Marjorie? Hmmm? Boys being boys? He just wanted to be friends? He’s a rebel in my house! I didn’t know what he was doing!” Six mocked. “No I think I understand exactly his motives Marjorie and that you turned a blind eye or worse were ignorant to what was happening in your ranks.” Marjorie opened her mouth to respond but swiftly closed it when Six cocked her shotgun. “I’d like to remind each of you that you only lead because of my good graces! I have been satisfied letting you manage what is yours and you pay your due to me, but if this shit ever...EVER...happens again I will exterminate your whole family till no-one remembers you ever existed!” The crowd was silent. Not even a gasp or a murmur. All eyes were on the three main players at the front. “Marjorie you have 24 hours to clean house and purge any more of this shitstains followers. I expect to see their corpses in the morning next to his.”

“But he’s alive.”

Six finally put her shotgun to use. The silence was broken with screams as Moriarty’s brains were sprayed against the floor and onto Marjorie’s pristine dress. She had been so close when she fired that his neck matched the ragged stumps of his feet.

“Not anymore.” she snarled and the crowd murmured. She forgot they were not used to a visible leader. “Get your shit together. 24 hours Marjorie. I will know whether you have done it or not and remember...I put all of you in your current position. I can easily take it away.”

Six turned and walked away head held high as what remained of Moriarty dripped down the perfect marble stairs.

--------

Vulpes sat next to Max listening in silence. Neither felt like making any quip or joke about what Six had to say. It was majestic, she had them all cowed by words alone and though the microphone lost some of her intonation, the venom with which she spoke to Marjorie was intoxicating. Especially when she claimed him as hers. He knew he had been wrong in delaying. She would make an excellent wife and agent. His dying dream could be reality. He would defend the nation and she would defend them both.

“She’s coming” muttered Max as the sound of mechanical gears roared to life. They sat watching the door as it seemed to take an forever to ascend. The friendly ding of the lift seemed like a death knell.

Both men waited with baited breath. When the doors pulled back they revealed the battered form of the Courier. She was bloody and dark bruises were already forming. He noted how her arm was at an awkward angle and fresh gore stained her skin red. She was resting against the back of the lift her eyes closed and peaceful. When she opened them he was taken aback by the intensity of her gaze as she focused on him. Slowly, she shuffled out of the cubicle. She was clearly favouring one side. Vulpes released a breath he didn't realise he was holding and Max held eerily still.

“Are you real?” She shouted through the door as she leaned on the frame. “Or is this is in my head?”
“Real.” He replied his voice quiet as he was in awe of his gore soaked, battle ready Amazon.

“How much do I owe?”

“10 thousand caps.” Max replied without moving more than his face. His whole body was tense.

Six shuffled over to the desk and dumped her bag noisily behind it. Rollers rattled on rollers and the sound of bottle caps followed as she laid them out all in neat little boxes.

“You best take it over then Max.” She replied. “There's a bag over there.” She pointed to a corner.

“Did she give you any stimpacks?”

“Five, I managed to negotiate.”

“Tell me you didn't fuck my doctor.” They both froze noting the steel grip on her shotgun. She was not in a friendly mood. “Max…”

“I may have supplied a sexual service...but I did not fuck her...with my cock.” Six raised her gun to rest against her shoulder. To others it would seem a casual gesture however right now it was quite the opposite. “She liked my mouth!!” He pleaded, even Vulpes was surprised by the panic in his friend's voice.

“I don't fucking believe it…” she growled low. “Tell me you at least made her come? How the fuck I'm going to face her if you fucked up.”

“I made sure. At least 3 times hence the five stimpacks.”

“Fine, you get to keep all your bits then. Take her the caps and try to keep your appendages to yourself. I like Dr. Usanagi.”

Max scuttled off the bed grabbing his weapon and loaded the caps without question. The reverence in which he placed his ill-gotten stimpacks was amusing till Max turned tail and ran. Then he was alone, his human shield disappearing downstairs.

Six turned and sat on the end of her desk, weariness was beginning to win over her anger but he knew he was on thin ice. Slowly he approached but she didn't look at him her gaze focused on single spot on the carpet. He moved in front of her and slowly moved to unbuckle her armour. Six growled weakly and tried to raise her bad arm the aggression quickly becoming a whimper.

“Let me help.” He soothed, her grip was still tight around the gun so he worked with what he could. First he unbuckled her chest armour, the small metal clasps were hard to grip as they were so slick they were with gore. There was little sound except for their breathing and the sound of fabric. Little by little he felt the tension begin to ebb from her until he could take the gun away and work on her other side.

“I'm sorry.” He began needing to fill the silence. “I was careless and the cannibal caught me unaware. I was anxious and I was careless.” He slowly peeled her shirt away, carefully lifting her shoulder through. As he reached around to her back she rested her head on his shoulder.

“I was so scared. The blade…” she croaked weakly he flinched as her hands trailed up his arms. She was so cold. “I bet profligate medicines aren't looking so bad eh?”

“They certainly aren't.” He chuckled, he began to loosen her belt and feed it through the loops.
“Can't wait to get me naked huh?” He could feel her smile against his shoulder her arm wrapping tight around him. “Don't scare me like that.”

“Let's get you cleaned up and show me how to heal you.”

“Pervert.”

----

Six felt like she was emerging from a suffocating cloud. Water sluiced over her skin. Vulpes had taken care to manoeuvre her out of her clothes and into the bath but she had refused to let go, holding onto the battered sleeve of his shirt. She shivered under his touch as he gently lathered soap into her skin lifting away the various blood samples that were smeared onto her skin. Thin rivers of red drained away, but she found she was unable to look him in the eye. Like the old tale of Orpheus and Eurydice; she feared that in seeing those icy blue eyes she would break the spell and she'd find herself alone again.

“Where should I inject these?”

“One in my neck, one on each side for my ribs and one in my shoulder once you've reset it. Do you need me to teach you how?”

“Even the Legion can set a shoulder.” Six bit back a scream as he pulled and twisted sharply it blotted out the sting of the needle. “Look at me Six.” He asked but she forced her eyes shut. “Why won't you look at me?” She winced at the hurt in his voice.

“I can't” she gripping the edge of the bathtub. “If I do then you won't be real.”

Warm arms pulled her into a tight embrace. Vulpes had wrapped her around him so that she straddled his lap their bodies pressed intimately close. She felt his breath against her neck, ticklish on her skin.

“Please.” He pleaded, pressing warm lips to her cold skin. “Let me see you.” He continued his kiss across her collarbone, light and ticklish and at times claiming and biting. “Do I feel like an illusion?” He asked leaning her back to lay on the carpet. She shook her head. “Do I sound like an illusion?” He kissed between her breasts hands tracing the soft skin of her side as he nipped, licked and bit his way down her body till he reached the her stomach. Instead of following the feeling of fire that was building in her veins he instead kissed her fingers and her palms, nuzzling into her touch. Once again she shook her head. “Look at me. Please.” She whimpered as he teased kisses from thigh to ankle before climbing over her once more. “Please?” He teased soft kisses to her lips encouraging her response. He lowered himself closer but still kept his weight off her tender ribs. Her hands that were clenched in his shirt but relaxed as she gave in to the kiss arms wrapping around his neck and demanding more. Only Vulpes touched her like this. When they broke apart it was the same cool blue eyes that she knew so well. They didn't disappear. He was real.

“Hey you.” He smiled stroking her cheek.

“Hey you.” She replied nuzzling into his touch. “Don't you dare get yourself killed again.”

“Only if you promise the same.” She kissed him again overjoyed and relieved.
“Vulpes? Perhaps we could take this to the bedroom, I'm a little chilly.” She chuckled.

“You’re right. I certainly wouldn't want Max seeing you this way.”

-------

They were alive, somehow. He doubted he could still call himself a true Legionnaire with the amount drugs in his system but either way, they were alive and together. And as she tugged him to the bed he found that really didn't care one bit. Six lay back on the mattress and pulled him above her. He teased the soft mounds of her breasts before giving in to her insistent tug for a kiss.

“I can't stay long.” He groaned between kisses and wayward touches as Six explored his chest with her mouth. “I need to be seen this morning in the camp and you need to arrive after otherwise Caesar will… gods be damned woman...he will be suspicious…”

“No.” She replied petulant and rolled them so he was pinned. “I don't want to.”

“We don't have a choice.”

“A beautiful naked woman on your lap and you're thinking of running away.”

“Think of it as delayed gratification.”

“Asshat.” She pouted rolling away. It was adorable, but they couldn't afford to be sloppy...yet. He followed spooning her from behind and taking her hand in his. Max had returned the rings when he had awoken, but he was relieved it fit.

“I didn't agree.” She mumbled into the pillow.

“I know.”

“You gonna ask.”

“I think that moment passed us by. You're mine as much am I am yours.” He grinned against her neck. She growled and rolled to face him.

“That's not how this works!” She slapped his chest. “This is where you ask me to marry you and I play hard to get and you call me a wicked profligate and convince me to change my mind.”

“Mmmm sounds like hard work and I am recovering…” he teased.

“Vulpes…” she growled. He took the hand with the ring in and brought it to his lips.

“Six, will you be my first and only wife, to stand at my side and support and protect me as I will protect and care for you?” he could see the half formed tears in her eyes and the bitten smile she struggled to suppress.

“Yes Vulpes, I will.”

Chapter End Notes
Hello everyone! Hope you enjoyed the end to this little series of events. A sweet end for a meal and a perfect lead into my rendition/fantasy of a Legion wedding. It's gonna be a multi-chapter event but hopefully you will enjoy it as much as I do.

I hope that you are all well and thank you for your continued support,
Liala
Preparations

Chapter Notes

Six and Vulpes prepare for their wedding, though not everyone seems to be in support.

After some debate and a heated argument Vulpes finally agreed to be teleported to the Frumentarii camp. Six had argued quite vehemently that the men knew he wasn't there and if they were seen arriving together all he had to do was say 'he was helping Six secure the strip for Caesar’ as it was not that far from the truth. Six had brought a large bag with her filled with wedding essentials. He didn't have a the heart to tell her that the Priestesses would probably not allow it. As soon as his men realised he had returned he was swamped by reports and congratulations. Six however remained in the sideline.

He led the way into the tent, his ring safely stowed away. It was not Legion issue and despite her protests they had them both hidden away. Six sat at his table reading a book while he sifted through the amassed reports. There had been many developments which needed his approval but with his absence no one had dealt with it. Perhaps he needed to make the chain of command more specific?

As he predicted, the Priestesses swarmed as soon as they heard he had returned. The eldest one (who was almost a crone) led them. They viewed themselves above the other women as if they were worth more than a slave. Vulpes had always viewed them with disdain. The Priestess were known for their betrayal if it furthered their agenda and preserved their bodies. Most of the men knew the rumours of Priests sampling the God’s women and the supposed ‘rituals’ that took place. It was one reason he avoided marriage. If it was just a vow then it would be easy but the whole spectacle was... voyeuristic and invasive. He had known men who had been punished after their wedding night due to a misplaced rumour started by the Priestesses. Still he had a role to play.

“Galia, it is a pleasure to see you this morning.” He charmed, but the majority of the hoard viewed him warily. *Good at least my reputation is intact.*

“I should hope so.” He noticed Six peek above her book. He was torn between her picking a fight and keeping her mouth shut. When he caught her eye he motioned to let it go. “With both you and the whore missing, Caesar began to worry.”

“Careful Priestess. Insulting my future wife is an unwise move.”

“Or what? You'll kill me? Caesar would have your head.”

“That depends.” Added Six.

“On what?”

“On whether or not your second in command rules it murder.” Six noted the woman's blank look
and rolled her eyes. “Looking at your age I’m sure they are counting down the minutes till you croak. If someone helps along the process I doubt they’d shed a tear.”

“I see you are already lacking in your training.” Galia sneered. “Still it… must be prepared. Mercia!” She shouted, a raggedy young woman shuffled forward, her clothes were ragged and her bones showed through her skin. “She will be your priestess Courier. Though an initiate she will suffice.”

“You dare slight the leader of the Frumentarii with an initiate for his wedding? With his position he should be given a high priestess.” Growled Max and Vulpes bit his tongue. He was foolish to think he would be given equality.

“Sadly for you, I care little for the groom or the bride and this order comes from Lanius.”

“It’s a joke.” Snapped Max. “We should petition Caesar.”

“There is no point is there?”

“None.”

“Fine then, Mercia it is.”

“Excellent.” She giggled behind a false smile. He wanted so badly to cut it from her face but he couldn't afford the punishment. “I look forward to the event.”

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Six was rather confused by the whole sorry state of affairs. The ‘Priestesses’ seemed little more than a coven of Bitches and spiteful hags than a religious order. She had picked up on Vulpes’ discomfort early on and decided to trust in his judgement. The girl given to her for preparations was half dead and starved, clearly it was another slight to wound Vulpes. The retinue left with a similar flourish as they arrived. The young priestess began to cry.

“Master…Inculta…” she whimpered between sniffs. “I must… ask you some… questions.”

“Sit down Mercia.” She coaxed. She could sense her lover's growing frustration. “Take it a step at a time.”

“What oils should be used on her skin?”

“Sweet flower.”

“Her hair, how should it be styled?”

Six flinched as he watched her.

“Braided with some loose.”

“Make up?”

“Rouge her lips.”
“Cream or razor.”

Vulpes stared.

“What’s the difference?” Asked Six.

“It’s just the method of hair removal. For a wedding all unwanted hair is removed as it is deemed unclean. As an officer Master Inculta can choose between a razor or a cream that removes hair permanently. However it leaves the skin sensitive, which would be difficult as the wedding is today.”

“Why would it be bad?”

“You...don't know?”

“I have no idea. I'm going to need you to explain.”

“I would like the cream, if you agree.”

“Of course” Six replied.

“Who is the second?”

“Maximus.”

“Finally, her clothes.”

“I have them.” Six added, Mercia looked horrified. “I wanted to surprise you.” Vulpes grinned.

“You heard her.”

“Thank you Sir.” Replied the Priestess. “Courier, please follow me.”

“What? Why? Is anyone going to explain?”

“ Courier, I would but I cannot. As per our law, I must leave you in her care. Follow her to the temple tent and prepare. Mercia explain the ceremony clearly. I will see you later.” she nodded in response understanding the role she had to play. But as she left the tent she looked back and wished she could kiss him goodbye. But there were rules.

Mercia led her out of the tent and out of the Frumentarii camp. The men stood and watched as she followed the young woman her duffel bag slung over her shoulder. They headed back towards Caesar's tent. Next to it on the hill was a series of smaller conjoined tents. It made sense it was kept on the hill, but the whispering groups of women around the area staring at her was warning that there was no safety here. Mercia motioned to the very end tent, it was smaller compared to the rest but large enough for a long wooden table and a small carpeted area. Mercia indicated to a pile of cushions and took a seat with Six facing opposite.

“Are you alright now?” Six began hoping to make the woman feel at ease.

“Am I alright???” She squeaked. “I should be asking you that. He hasn't hurt you too badly? Do you need any healing powder? Any… preventatives?”

“What for?”
“Vulpes Inculta is your master! He is the most sadistic of them all! It's alright to show me, I won't tell him.” Six stared blankly at the young woman. She was genuinely concerned for her safety and despite being terrified of Vulpes herself she was willing to risk punishment for her.

“I mean, he’ll probably kill me anyway for fucking up his wedding. At least the other Priestesses will be off my back.”

“He doesn't kill without reason. I'm sure you are competent Mercia, though I apologise you have been put in this position. All we can do is try our best and pray the Gods are on our side. But I do need you to explain this wedding to me. I don't understand why he needs a second or to make choices for me.”

“Forgive me Courier!” Squeaked Mercia. “Oh my, oh dear, I thought you knew. Free women are so different.”

“Mercia stay with me baby.” Six clicked her fingers to get the girl’s attention. “Why the choices.”

“Most wives are reluctant or terrified slaves. The husband usually likes to dress them up like a doll and make it a bit more tasteful that forced marriage and servitude.”

“So he chose everything but my clothes. Why hair removal? I get dirty but…you mentioned it was too late.”

“Ummmm… some husbands prefer the feel of the woman's sexual parts being hairless. Whether during sex or... forbidden acts. As an officer he can choose the more expensive cream and those areas will be hairless forever.”

“What acts?”

“Oral sex.” Six indicated for more. “Where a man licks the woman’s pussy to make her wet.”

“Oh. I didn’t know that was a thing. We can work around sore.” Mercia sat stunned.

“Are you not afraid he’ll use your tenderness to hurt you?”

“Nope.” Mercia scribbled some more on her notes. “Talk me through what will happen.”

“There is a formal wedding ceremony held by the priest who leads the prayers and promise. Then there is a great feast in which the feeding part of the ceremony takes place. Then the couple retire to the temple to... consummate...the marriage.”

“Consummate?” Six blushed heavily. “You mean, have sex? In the temple?”

“It's to encourage pregnancy and claim a slave. But don't panic! I have some things that can ease that time.”

“Then what happens?”

“In the morning, you leave the tent married and Caesar blesses it. Then I suppose more celebration.”

“So, make a promise, share some food, fuck like rabbits then back to prayers.” Six counted off.

“Yes, pretty much.”

“Alright, what’s first?”
“So going for the cream.” Chuckled Max. “Are you hoping she sits on a stimpack or something?”

“She's technically not fully Legion till we’re married.”

“Ahhhhh technicalities. Our moral grey area.”

The two men joked back and forth as Vulpes cleaned his armour and prepared himself for the wedding. He shaved his beard and trimmed his hair rather than going for his regular buzz cut and groomed himself so that perhaps she would find it more pleasing. To be having a full wedding in a war camp was ridiculous in itself. He was concerned about the ceremony and how little Six knew. Her admission of inexperience earlier weighed heavily on him. Mercia would have told her of the latter part of the ritual and although they had been hot and heavy before, he worried she would be uncomfortable. If only it had been just the ceremony then he could have whisked her away to Novac and taken their time. Still, the thought of her being wholly his was definitely stroking his ego.

“I wanted to thank you. For naming me your second today.”

“Who else would I choose? You’re the most competent of my men and despite pulling the shit you have, Six does not hate your guts.”

“Not afraid that I’ll kill you now that I am the benefactor of your will?”

“If you could Max, I’m sure you would have by now. Also you wouldn't want to incur the wrath of my soon to be wife.”

“Mars preserve me, you two are going to be a terrifying couple.” Vulpes chuckled putting the finishing touches to his freshened armour.

“Sir?” A Frumentarii called from outside the tent. They had been taught to call out after he accidentally shot those that came in quietly.

“Yes?”

“The men have prepared a small meal to celebrate your wedding. Would you join us?”

Vulpes was truly blessed.

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“You didn't tell me that it would sting that much!” Hissed Six through gritted teeth, the flustered priestess rushed around applying a soothing balm.

“It was implied!” She squeaked.

“Ah fuck it!” Six snarled ordering her bag brought to her. She took out a stimpack and jabbed it
into the sensitive flesh of her thigh, the instant relief between her legs was blissful. It was only when she realised Mercia was silent that she remember the Legion and their drug policy. “You didn't see that.” The young girl nodded. “What is next?”

“A bath, then oils to scent the skin.”

“I hope to God he is putting in as much effort.”

“You shouldn't speak like that.”

“Like what?”

“Like you're unafraid of him. He will punish you badly if he heard.”

“Is that what you think of him? That he's cruel?”

“He is!” She whispered as she filled the bathtub. “I heard that every slave whom he beds disappears the night after and all that's left is their bloody rags. He once beat a man to death without uttering a word, he just smiled! If I were you, I'd behave lest the same fate befalls me.”

“I am not afraid.” Six replied. Vulpes wasn't her enemy, but Lanius was. Six stripped off and hopped into the warm water. “I'm just nervous for later...what if I disappoint him?”

“You don't have a say Courier, none of the wives usually do. He will find his pleasure either way.”

Six sighed again. She appreciated the woman’s concern but she had chosen this marriage and the thought of sleeping with Vulpes was only daunting due to her inexperience. She held no fear that he would just take what he wants. Her fear was not remembering what to do. She had already hidden the pills the priestess had slipped her to make her body numb and unfeeling.

“Please don't punish me.” She heard the girl whimper.

“I won't, you're doing your best and I can see you are trying to help. But please remember, I chose Vulpes as my husband and I intend to survive.”

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“So Sir, the Courier is she as sweet as she looks?” Asked one of the younger recruits. He laughed into his plate of meat and bread. Their rations had been better than they had been in a long time. The men were in good spirits viewing his acquisition of a wife as a blessing.

“Far sweeter.” He grinned. “And ever so eager.”

“’Ere boss, word in the kitchens is that she bargained to get us better rations.”

“That would be true.”

“Why would she do that?” Trust his men to be searching for an angle.

“The Courier wants a place to belong. She chose us. Not the Legion as a whole but specifically the Frumentarii. Since then she has actively worked to further our work and has taken control of the strip in our name. All because she wants to belong. With her as my wife we will secure the
“It’s time for Caesar and keep his favour.”

“Do we gotta be nice to her?”

“I suggest you be polite, Max can vouch what she is like when she is angry.” The men looked expectantly at their lieutenant.

“She amputated a man’s feet with shotgun bullets, forced him to walk the length of the strip on bloody stumps and stomped on the wound when he stopped. She then obliterated his brains across the front of the ultra-luxe.”

“Sounds like my kinda gal!” Shouted one of the men and the rest laughed.

“Still congratulations boss! Here’s to the gods giving you many pups!”

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“All ready and not a moment to spare.” Sighed Mercia capping the red lipstick. “Please gods let him like it.”

“I’m sure he will.” She straightened the collar line of her dress. She had found another red dress. The collar was cut low showing off the top of her breasts that were pushed up by her lace bra. The fabric hung closely against her skin but was loose to knee length. Underneath she wore her garters and lace panties hoping that third time was the charm and he would finally remove them...slowly.

Six was anxious for the ceremony, Mercia hadn't spoken more about her role. She supposed most wives didn't need to. Yet as Mercia led her out of the tent and towards the main altar her thoughts kept drifting to Vulpes and the consummation. She could already feel herself getting wet at the fantasies that occupied her mind. Would he be rough in his eagerness or considerate? She hoped that at least he was as thorough as he was in other matters. All she had to do was survive a ceremony and a feast.

Easy, right?

Chapter End Notes

We're getting there! The wedding is gonna be split into three chapters, also so it is easily searchable again for smut.

Also as it seems we're reaching a climax, (giggles) this is the first event in their lives, I still have many things left for them to achieve and a large need for more smut than one event. They are a force to be reckoned with and I want to help them achieve an ending that isn't strictly cannon. Thank you for your continued readership and I hope that you
are well.
The Ceremony

Chapter Notes

Part one of the wedding below. Lost my way for a bit in self doubt. I'm happier with it now.

The wedding is a mix of my headcannon and roman marriage practices.

As always Italics are internal thoughts.

Vulpes stood waiting in the temple tent. The wine he had shared with Caesar beforehand still stung in his gut and left a sour taste in his mouth. Would she come? Did she still want to go through it? Lots of scenarios ran through his head from her coming in with a machine gun and killing them all to her dropping to her knees and begging him for his cock. Get a grip Inculta there are still enemies around. Galia sat beside the altar behind the high priest, her expression was like the cat that got the cream. She was waiting for it all to fall apart and collapse. Vulpes only hoped Six has been prepared enough about what to expect and would perform in a manner Caesar approved. Otherwise they would all pay.

The priest stood facing the altar mumbling prayers to the various gods preparing for ceremony. He tended to invoke the gods only when he truly needed them and now was one of those times. He prayed to Juno that the marriage would be smooth and strong, to Hestia for their home, to Mars for his men and Aphrodite for their marriage night later. Max shuffled beside him. His friend’s armour was armour polished to a shine and was cleaner than he had seen it for a long time. This was happening. Like a single chime cutting through the noise the reality of what was to come hit him like a sack of bricks.

“I know that look. Finally hit you has it.” Chuckled Max by his side.

“I honestly never thought to be here till after the campaign.”

“She suits you.” Replied Max. “You suit her.”

“Thank you friend.”

“Watch out, here comes Caesar.” He nodded towards the altar.

“How are you Vulpes?” Asked Caesar jovially. Vulpes tensed as his leader slapped his back like an affectionate father. “I know you haven't take on a wife before and from your report on the Strip she is going to be quite a handful.”

“You know me Lord Caesar, ever eager to break a new recruit. The only difference is this time the reward will be rather satisfying and less bloody.”

“I don't know Vulpes, your methods leave many a captive with a few extra holes.”
Vulpes chuckled ever the obedient servant. “Yes, but have you truly looked at the Courier? I’d rather like to keep her looking pretty and whole.” In fact he rather abhorred the thought of her injured. He knew she felt the same.

“Don’t get too entranced by her, boy.” Chastised Caesar. “Profligate women are all the same if you give them an inch of leeway. Treat her as you would any other Legion woman. These profligate women will take you for everything you’ve got.”

“Is that from experience?” A daring statement on his part.

“Once. Long ago when I was a lot younger and hadn't been taught the lessons I have taught you.”

“Then I hope to continue under your wise counsel.”

“My Lord the bride is here.” A Praetorian announced.

“Excellent, excellent.” Smiled his leader. “Send her in.”

Vulpes turned to face where Six would enter. A small part of his pride hoped she would find his efforts... pleasant even though they were minor in comparison to what she must have done. The guards at the door pulled back the drapes and the room fell silent. Even Lanius stopped his conversation and stared.

She was a Goddess.

She stepped in the room head held high, her hair braided loose as he had requested, the loose strands begged to be touched. The simple rouge of her lips didn't overwhelm her natural beauty but she looked radiant. He smiled at her red dress, a different cut to her other dress, but still figure hugging and had him wishing time moved faster so he could peel her out of it. *Were those the tights with the garter belt?* She smiled shyly under his gaze, a soft blush staining her cheeks.

“If I were a younger man…” growled Caesar low beside him. “Savour her Inculta and thank me in the morning.”

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Six stood at the doorway surveying the gobsmacked crowd. It was like a painting, all bright colours and frozen figures. The Frumentarii and officers gathered wore the traditional red of the Legion and their patchwork armour clean from blood. The crowd was split into two sections with the Frumentarii behind Vulpes and the rest on the other side. It was like a regular wedding she supposed as the Frumentarii were certainly Vulpes’ family. She smiled coyly to break the tension, she had followed Vulpes instructions to the letter and gone beyond. By the stunned silence she had certainly achieved something. The temple was also richly decorated with thick heavy fabrics that
even faded were bolder that the drab brown of the desert. Reds and purples hung in swathes and gave the room a more hedonistic appearance. The focal point of the tent was the large makeshift altar. It was made of multiple shelves containing incense, offerings and idols of the gods that protected their camp. It was a heady mix of religion and primal energies. Six felt intimidated but was not put off. Step by step she walked to the altar calmly. The priest smiled with a leering grin, Mercia following her footsteps with the ornaments and items required for their wedding.

When she reached her future husband she stopped, first bowing to Caesar and then took her place by Vulpes. Her lover placed his hand possessively at the base of her back and guided her the last few steps towards the altar. She refused to be cowed or intimidated by the men around her. She was a woman worthy of Vulpes and the rest she would make them kneel.

“You look radiant.” Vulpes stated.

“Thank you,” she blushed keeping her eyes averted. She could play the coy woman, her fire was for him alone.

The priest held up his hand to silence the crowd. Caesar took his place on the throne by the side of the altar, for he was the chosen one by the Gods. The elderly man nodded that they may begin.

“We are here today to witness the union between the man and this woman. Marriage is a sacred promise and bond for any true citizen of the Legion. For a man to take wife is a commendable duty to produce more citizens for the glory of Caesar and to ensure that order is maintained.” The room cheered and clapped. “Today Vulpes Inculta will take this woman as his bride making her an honest woman befitting the Legion.” The priest handed her a vial of water and a lit candle. “Did she teach you the ritual girl?” Hissed the Priest to Six, Galia almost feral in her grin.

“I Courier Six, do surrender and offer myself to you Vulpes. I swear to share and give you everything I own. I give you this water and fire as a gift of our shared property. I offer you my body and pledge myself only to you. I give you this golden rope as a symbol of that promise, that I will be tied to you and that my body is yours. I beg you to tie it, until you wish to undo it. I will be your Venus and I will give you sons.”

Vulpes grinned, she had recounted it perfectly.

“Now you Lord Inculta.” The old priest prompted.

“I Vulpes Inculta, do take you Courier Six as my wife. I will protect you and provide for you as I see fit. I accept your gifts of property and will use them to further the Legion. I will guide you as I see fit and lead you on the true path of a Legion Citizen.” He took the golden rope from her hand and looped it around her waist before tying it in a tight bow. It felt like collar. “I tie this knot as a symbol of our union and of your vow and take you as my wife.”

“In the joining of these two before the gods, the knot and promise that binds you together lasts until the day you pass into the underworld. I call upon the gods to bless this union with sons.” The priest bought a dagger and Six tensed. With a sawing motion, the priest cut through the loose end of the rope creating a sizeable chunk.

“Take each others right hand.” They did as instructed and the priest bound them together. “In the eyes of the gods I pronounce you man and wife.”
The tent erupted into a loud cheer. Max clapped Vulpes on the back as her new husband grinned from ear to ear. Six had taken great care to learn the ritual, Mercia had been quite clear and she was pleased she had followed instructions well. The priest leered at her, as did many of the men in the room, and if it wasn’t someone she had chosen to marry she could understand the terror most wives felt. Perhaps if Vulpes became Caesar she could convince him to change the practice. As the noise died down so did the anticipation growing in her gut. It was a step closer to the evening and for all their flirting she was still worried.

“You may now kiss the bride.”

Gentle fingers pressed under her chin raising her gaze. She had avoided looking at him but now she felt the full force of his gaze. He was so handsome in his uniform and she felt so shy. As their eyes met she felt the fire raise in her chest again as he leant forward for a kiss. He tucked a loose hair behind her ear and leaned close.

“Block them out.” He whispered in her ear as if he sharing his dirty thoughts. “Focus on me, on us.” She blushed again heavily before he pulled her into a kiss. The room erupted into a group of hoots and wolf whistles. She braced her untied hand on his chest and closed her eyes bringing him into focus. She moaned against his touch. Six gasped and Vulpes took the opportunity to deepen the kiss and she hummed pressing her body close to his.

“It certainly seems a good matching!” Laughed Caesar clapping Vulpes on the back breaking them apart. Six grumbled looking disappointed before Caesar took the back of her hand and kissed it. “I agree with the priest this union will be a blessing.” Six noted Vulpes glare at Caesars touch. It gave her a small sense of pride that she was protected. It was nice to be wanted. “With the gods satisfied with their promise now is the time for celebration. To the feast!” Caesar commanded and the congregation filtered out. “Take your time coming to the tent. I’m sure that you will want to … confirm your promise.”

Six blushed and pressed herself close to Vulpes pulling from Caesar's grasp.

“Thank you my lord.” Vulpes replied. Six shivered under the caress of Vulpes thumb in the small of her back.

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“Alright, we’re alone.”

Six sagged in relief against him. Her arm snaked around him for a hug.

“So needy already my wife?”

She laughed against him. “Well when my husband is so handsome I find it difficult to resist.”. She kissed him sweetly again. “Husband…” she smiled her gaze warm and affectionate.

“Wife.” He kissed her again. He could get used to this intimacy and affection. Something to smooth the rough edges. “Let me untie our wrists.” He growled.
“What about the belt?” she queried.

“That is reserved for our night time activities. Would you deny me the joy in unwrapping my wife before our first night?”

Six coughed nervously “How did Mercia do? Did we blow you away?” He groaned as she kissed along his neck.

“My dear Courier, it was like you painted a great target on my back with how many men want to be in my place.”

“I bet you revelled in it.”

“Very much so!” He grinned so very pleased with himself. “Though I daresay Maximus is rethinking his decision to not assassinate me and take my position.” Six gestured for him to elaborate. “He is my second. In law, should I die, he will inherit my title, possessions and...wife.”

“Wait. What?”

“If I die, you go to Max. Would you have preferred being auctioned to anyone?”

“Good point. So he could kill you to climb the ranks?”

“It's how I did it.”

“Well he best not try it else your wife will feed him his manly parts.” She teased and he pressed a kiss to her forehead. He was pretty sure she would follow through.

“Dinner next. Are you prepared?”

“Mmmhmmmm.” She nodded running her hands up and down his arms. “I have to feed and fawn over you and you will feed me some cake.” She leaned up pressing kisses against his collar and neck. “And when they are satisfied and wine starts to flow…” she teased his neck with her teeth. She was making it very difficult to concentrate. “…then we slip away to our special room and…” she breathed against his ear. “Fuck.” He groaned as she peeled herself away from him heading towards the door. “I don’t know about you but, I’d like to get that alone time real soon.”

Vulpes found he had to agree.

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Caesar’s tent had been radically transformed from an empty throne room to an adequate banquet hall. Tables had been pulled from the wings or stolen from the rest of the camp and were stocked with foods more decadent than she had ever seen in the Frumentarii camp. That would have to change. Would Vulpes let me go hunting? The revellers were spread out, plates were constantly refilled almost as quickly as the wine was poured. Her role now was to look pretty and dote on her husband. They were sat at the head table by Caesar’s right side. A sign of his regard for Vulpes and how he favoured them. Lanius sat to Caesar’s left, a definite slight to the General. Max sat beside Six, as Vulpes second he too was given a seat of honour.
Quickly Six grew bored of the feast. The men were getting rowdy and lecherous and the wives and slaves of the men were being increasingly pawed over. Watching, Six knew she could not let it continue, but to achieve that, she needed to get in a position of power. The desert needed change; to be reborn. The Legion could bring stability and security, but the rest needed improvement. She knew what the Legion was when she signed up. She chose to ignore it for the sake of what she wanted. She had wanted Vulpes and this was the only way to achieve that. But perhaps, she could do more. She jumped as Vulpes caressed her cheek.

“You look out of sorts.” he whispered in her ear. Six turned her head and pressed her forehead against his.

“Nothing to worry about.” she smiled. “Just thinking.” she kissed him lightly hoping it would be enough to placate him. Vulpes kissed her roughly before returning to his conversation with Caesar and Lanius. Lanius. Killing the hulk of a man could be her first improvement to the Legion.

Six noticed Vulpes and Max’s drinks were low and dutifully refilled them. Max patted her head like an obedient child knowing she couldn’t kick his ass.

“I haven’t said it yet but you look devastating.”

“Good or bad?” she chuckled, passing a glance back to Vulpes who had taken her hand in his.

“Yes Husband?” she asked.

“Food.” he asked, but there was heat in his gaze.

“Of course.” she cut and picked the best cuts of food for him and speared a single piece on a fork. She held it out to him and he ate it from the fork. When she went to get the next piece, he stopped her.

“Leave the fork. Get the plate and sit on my lap.” he growled. She looked confused but realised Caesar and Lanius were watching. It was a test. She picked up his plate of meat and stood before sitting on his lap so her legs wrapped around his waist. The position caused her skirt to ride up and reveal more of the stocking. Without hesitation she picked up a piece of meat and held it for him to eat.

“Very good,” he growled leaning forward and took the tasty morsel from her grip sucking her fingers clean. “Now you.” he picked up a morsel and held it for her to eat. Carefully she took the meat into her mouth careful of her teeth. She smiled chewing the meat before sucking each finger he held the meat with to clean them.

“God damn.” cursed Caesar. “If I were a younger man!” laughed Caesar again. “I bet even you are jealous.” he elbowed Lanius. “Vulpes, if you ever care to share her, I will be grievously insulted if I am not included.”

Again the men drifted towards discussing Legion matters and Vulpes merely kept her pressed close. Her already wet mound pressed against his armour but she could seek no pleasure. When she wanted attention she would kiss along his neck and the would feed each other again. Once, when feeding her wine some spilled and he chased the red rivulet with his tongue collecting the liquid and she moaned rocking against his infuriating armour. Still all she did was wait. Couldn’t they bring out the cake already? Accepting her fate she rested her head on his shoulder and
snuggled down. As she remained quiet and demure they gave up all sorts of secrets. Perhaps Vulpes would reward her later?

Eventually the priest brought a small dish with a small sweet cake in the centre. The priest waited expectantly for her to move off Vulpes lap. But she made no effort to move and Vulpes didn’t move to allow her to leave. If anything he pulled her closer. The priest started to tap his foot and Vulpes shrugged expectantly before nibbling and kissing up her neck. The priest now coughed for their attention.

“Oh Vulpes you Dog!” laughed Caesar. “Put her down.” Reluctantly she slid from his lap but brought her chair closer to him. The Priest held the cake and Six took it and turned to Vulpes. Holding the plate tightly she squeaked when he pulled her onto his lap again pressing her mound close to his crotch. The Priest grunted in disapproval. *Was Vulpes drunk?* She wondered. He was clearly flaunting protocol.

“I give you this food, my wife, and share what is mine with you. For our future.” He took a large bite out of the cake and fed her the rest. Strong arms pulled her close and he kissed her roughly sharing the flavour of the cake between them. She cupped his cheeks and caressed him. Her hips unconsciously rocking against him as he fisted her hair. Vaguely she heard Max and the Frumentarii cheer but all she cared about was the man beneath her.

“It seems the happy couple cannot wait for the feast to be over.” Laughed Caesar.

“How can I my Lord when you give me such a capable husband?” Replied Six breathlessly, feeling bold and on an adrenaline high.

“Then begone with you both. I can’t bear to watch the Priests blush anymore. I release you from this banquet.” he turned to Vulpes. “Thank me in the morning.”

The couple were gone before Caesar changed his mind.

Chapter End Notes

I hope you enjoyed it, second half of the wedding and then Vulpes and Six vs. The World.

As I said before this is my personal headcannon. As Six consented to the marriage it's rather peaceful. For other officers who forcefully take a wife it usually involves screaming/gags and the priestess reading the woman's part.

Vulpes and Six had a full wedding fit for an official. In the war camp, I headcannon that brides taken during the campaign have the same structure to the wedding but instead of a wedding feast they get extra rations. But for our happy couple, Caesar decided to go all out for morale and a show of power.

I hope you enjoyed it.
Here we are at the wedding night. Man it's been a journey to get here. To be honest, this was the scene that I dreamed up that inspired the fic in the first place. I'm not gonna lie it's 12 pages of fluff and filth!

I can't wait to share their married life with you all in the next arc of the story. I hope you all enjoy this chapter.

P.s. Thoughts are italics, we begin with Six and end with Vulpes.

Six had to walk double time to keep up with Vulpes as he lead them out of the feasting tent. Mercia was waiting by the temple tent Six had gotten ready in and waved them over. Vulpes gripped her hand tightly but didn't bother to look back. Perhaps he feared she would vanish like Eurydice returning from the underworld. Mercia bowed and pulled back the heavy drapes to reveal the newly redecorated room.

The table had been replaced by a large double bed frame. The frame was made from metal and handcuffs hung from the headboard. The mattress was wrapped in the cleanest sheets she had ever seen in the desert. A chest of drawers stood at the bottom of the bed doubling as a table. There was a carafe with wine, water for drinking and another bottle of whiskey. *Damn they were big on their booze.* Against one wall was a small washbowl and at the head of the bed a statuette of Venus looking down onto the mattress. *That wasn't off putting.* Tucked away by the entrance was a rack for amour.

“My lord.” curtsied Mercia “The ceremonial wine is prepared and I hope the room is to your liking.”

“It is, you have done well today.”

“Please untie the rope at your leisure and I will return with the High Priest and Priestesses in the morning for the morning celebration.

“Thank you Mercia.” Vulpes replied. But Six was confused.

As the attendant left and the heavy canvas of the tent closed the world shrank into the confined space. Vulpes busied himself adjusting the lamps and dimming them. She fumbled with knot at her waist not sure as to what she was meant to do. Of course Cass had shared many stories in quite explicit detail but she wasn't Cass. She shuffled nervously from foot to foot as Vulpes hung up his cloak.

“Six?” He asked startling her. “Nervous?”
“Yes.” She nodded sheepishly wrapping herself in his arms. She nuzzled against his neck seeking security as her fears took hold. She sighed in relief as he held her tight.

“You smell so good.” He growled. “There is no need to rush. We have all night.” He kissed her forehead and turned to the table pouring a cup of wine. “Drink this,” he offered. “It will make things…easier for you.”

She took the proffered glass and sniffed it. It was overly sweet and flowery. Clearly something has been added.

“What's in it?” He looked away. “Goddammit Vulpes, what is in this?”

“An aphrodisiac, something to help ease nerves of anxious or…”

“Unwilling wives.” She finished for him. At least he had the decency to look ashamed. But he was genuinely trying to help in the only way he knew how. “I don't want it.”

“It will help, Six. It’ll make it more pleasurable for you.” She put the glass on the table. “I know you're anxious. I don't want you to be uncomfortable.” She silenced him with a gentle, soul wrenching kiss.

“Listen here, husband. I don't...I don't need it. I appreciate you are trying to help.” She cupped his cheek and he pressed into her touch his blue eyes focused on her. “It is not because I lack desire for you. Quite the opposite. I've been waiting for this all day.” She hummed as he kissed her palm. “It's just I am inexperienced with a scrambled brain and I don't want to disappoint you…stupid I know.”

“If it worries you it's important. Forgive me, I only wanted your comfort.”

“Thank you.” She smiled. He hummed at the soft press of her lips against his own. “Perhaps we should get you out of that armour.” She bit her lip tugging at the buckles of his chest plate.

“I'd have to agree.” He pulled her into a breathtaking kiss, running his fingers through her hair as her hands undid buckles. His tongue teased her lips seeking entrance and deepening the kiss. “Vulpes how can I take this armour off if you keep kissing me?”

“With great difficulty I imagine.”

“Then help me get you down to your tunica. Then it's my turn to lose some layers.” She winked. “Don't you want to see my undergarments? They are made of lace.”

The buckles came undone much quicker with Vulpes aid. She giggled at his eagerness as they stripped him of armour. Yet despite their rush she took great care to hang each piece on the rack as it was his prized possession. He handed her the last piece leaving him in only his tunica.

“When did he remove his boots?” She added the last vambrace to the stand and gasped as two strong arms wrapped around her from behind holding her tightly against his broad chest. Six could feel the press of his cock against her behind.

“Your turn.” He growled running his hands from her hips up her sides to her breasts. Six arched her back to his touch pressing his breasts towards his hands. “I don't really want to rip this dress.”

“Would you get the zip?”
“Gladly.” He growled tugging at the zip on her dress slowly. The sound of the metal teeth undoing heightened the anticipation. Warm lips pressed against her neck and she jumped at the sudden touch as she felt his grin against her skin. Centimetre by centimetre he exposed her kissing the uncovered skin with slow, gentle kisses almost like a gentle caress. Her breathing quickened as the zip came to its end. She pulled away tugging him with her towards the bed and felt powerful and beautiful like that first night in the Ultra-Luxe that felt like an age ago.

Six turned in his grasp, keeping his hands on her hips. “Would you untie me from the rope?” she peered up at him lip bitten. “Please?”

Vulpes grinned and slowly pulled the loose ends of the bow undoing it. But as before he was taking his sweet time and she wriggled impatiently.

“Patience wife.” he chuckled. “I want to savour you.”

“Pervert.”

“That’s two punishments I owe you. Did you think I forgot about the one in the Cannibal’s lair.”

“I had bigger priorities. Don’t remind me.” she hugged him close. “Never again.” she whimpered.

“Never.” he replied unwinding the golden rope from around her waist and wrapping it around the end of the bed. She squinted at him trying to understand his motive. “There are many uses for rope. Perhaps we can find a use for it later?”

“H...how?” she mumbled.

“Well.” he purred tugging one of her dress sleeves down revealing the black lace strap of her bra. “I could bind your hands to the headboard exposing your beautiful body to me.” he kissed her neck nipping and continuing his explanation between teasing bites. “I could take my time exploring every inch of you, seeing what reactions I could elicit. Keep you on the edge of coming until you were shaking with need and begged me to let you come.” She shivered under his touch as he kissed her passionately. The heat building between them both.

“Go on.” stammered Six as Vulpes tugged at her other sleeve. He pulled her close, trapping the dress between them. Six groaned feeling his hardened length against her belly.

“What next? Perhaps I’d bind our hands like at the wedding so I could keep you close. Or perhaps you would bind me and ride me at your pleasure. Have me under your thumb.” He growled.

“You’d have to really persuade me though.”

“I can be very persuasive.” she replied.

“I am well aware.” he chuckled. “That gives me another idea. I could bind your arms behind you, put you on your knees then see how well you use that pretty mouth.”

“I...I... don’t know how. I’ve heard stories...would you teach me?” she tried to look innocent to tease him. But when she met his gaze the raw hunger in his eyes brought a red stain to her cheeks.

“We have the rest of our lives to learn each other...thoroughly.”
Vulpes stepped back and Six caught the front of her dress holding the sagging material tightly. It was Vulpes turn to watch this time. He sat on the edge of the bed. The bulge more prominent as he leaned back resting on his elbows. “Like what you see?” she asked.

He grinned running his hand up his bulge. “You have me at your mercy, Six.”

“Yes, then I will use it well.”

Tugging at the loose neckline she pulled the front of her dress down and freed her arms revealing the black lace of her bra. The whole cup was sheer, black lace. From his seat Vulpes would see her hardened nipples through the thin fabric. She hadn’t worn it to be modest. Turning around she looked back at her lover as she pushed the fabric lower. Bending forward, she wiggled her hips easing the dress down revealing her garter belt and the thin scrap of lace that covered her sex. She noticed Vulpes watch enraptured his hand stroking his cock languidly as his eyes roamed her body. Facing him once more she let the fabric drop in a cascade as she stood proud in her lingerie. With a final flourish she undid her braid and teased it loose leaving her hair loose and curling down her back.

It was the small things she noticed in his response. The way his fingers fidgeted with the fabric of his tunica or the small wet patch in the fabric. He licked his lips like the wolf who got into the chicken coop. Six stepped towards him pushing him back when he wanted to sit up till he was flat on his back, her hips straddling his pressing her soaked slit against his covered cock. She took his hands in hers pressing them above his head. She could feel the tension in his muscles as she leant forward her hair falling around him like a curtain. His gaze never left hers. She could feel his breathing increase. His whole body taut. Six started at the base of his neck kissing and licking the muscle and skin there. He groaned rocking up against her.

“Six.” he groaned as she moved her way up; kissing along his jaw, up to cheek, across his forehead. He tipped his head back as far as he could to try and coax her towards his lips but she kept moving away each time. Vulpes sulked and she giggled at how silly he looked. When she kissed the side of his mouth she felt him shudder; torn between caving in and remaining annoyed. She pressed featherlight kisses to the edge of his lips till he conceded and gave in. He yanked his hands from her grasp. One ran through her hair and pulled her close the other hand was pressed against her back as they lost themselves in a kiss.

With great strength he rolled the pair of them over until Six was pinned beneath him. Vulpes crawled down her body slipping off the bed. His Tunica was much messier than before. Six lay back and watched as he yanked the red material over his head and tossed it away. She bit her lip openly ogling her husband. She had seen him shirtless before but she admired the view every time. He was like a marble statue, muscular but not like a bulging supermutant. She wanted to spend an evening licking and teasing each one. His boxers did little to hide his erection but her cheeks reddened at seeing the hard outline of his cock. He was long and thick and for a moment she wondered how he would be able to fit.

“Enjoying yourself?” He asked.

“Very much so...but those boxers seem awfully tight. I think you should lose them.” She grinned pressing him back with her foot when he tried to leap for her.
Large hands wrapped around the ankle pressed against his chest. She squeaked when he pressed his thumbs into the arch of her foot.

“Take off your bra.” he asked and she complied. The sharp intake of his breath as she tossed the thin fabric aside boosted her confidence. Without speaking, he ran a hand down each leg pushing her thighs apart as he knelt between them. At his command she moved closer to the edge but try as she might he would not let her close her legs.

“Vulpes!” She cried when she felt the soft press of his mouth against the sensitive skin of her thigh. His mouth was close to her sensitive slit and her heart was hammering in her chest. She felt the snap of her garters against skin as he rolled down her stocking, kissing and biting the revealed skin. Six tried to buck him away but his grip meant she was kept open and on display. She watched him through fingers as he undid the other peeling it down her legs and tossing it aside treating it the same.

“Your legs are so smooth.” He noted. “Did you use a stimpack for the cream?”

“I may have sat on one by accident.” She replied her breathing harsh. She felt like the smallest touch of him against her skin would set her alight. “The cream hurt like a bitch.”

“Then I should thank you properly.” His hands grasped the top of her thighs close enough he could run his thumb along her clothed slit. She blushed when she heard the wet sound.

“You are absolutely dripping.” He growled kissing her stomach tenderly. “I bet if I reach under here it would be like a lake.” He purred.

“Please.” She whimpered.

“Please what? Be specific my dear.”

“Please touch me.”

“I am.”

“Please touch my...pussy...Vulpes.”

“Gladly.”

Vulpes ran his thumbs up the sensitive skin by her hip hooking his thumbs in her underwear and dragging them off along with the garter belt. She lay completely bare before him. Her skin flushed and gaze heated. Did he like what he saw?

“Like Venus herself. Lie in the centre.” Six heard the last rustle of fabric as she climbed to the centre of the bed. As she lay back she watched as Vulpes climbed on beside her and she squeaked realising he was naked. She was surprised his boxers fit! Vulpes chuckled realising her panic. “It won't hurt you.”

“Can...Can I touch it?” She asked and he nodded guiding her hand around his length. Tentatively, Six stroked and touched his cock inquisitively, forgetting it was attached to her lover. She traced her thumb around the leaking tip gathering the fluid and spreading it as Vulpes moaned into her hair. She stroked the hard shaft relishing the way he groaned and gasped as she changed grip.
Vulpes pulled her hand away kissing her sweetly.

“May I?” His index finger tapped over the apex of her slit and she nodded.

Vulpes began slow running his forefinger up and down her slit gathering the moisture there. Six writhed sensitive at the simple touch. One finger was replaced by two and he pressed deeper running up and down but not penetrating. Each caress sent jolts of pleasure through her body as he whispered sweet praises in her ear at how wet she was, how good it would feel to be inside her and how happy she made him. Six wanted to reply but instead filled the room with screams; her back arching from the bed as he circled her clit roughly. Where Vulpes’ grunts were controlled and quiet; Six was loud and uncontrolled. It was far more intense than when she did it herself and she gripped the blanket desperate for an anchor. “So good…” he praised adding to the intensity. Slowly he slid a finger inside, finding her body warm and willing. Six begged incoherently. It was too much and not enough at the same time and Vulpes continued his praise as he finger fucked her. Every now and then his thumb would graze her clit and she would scream louder. The pleasure growing towards an intense peak. Vulpes silenced Six with a sloppy kiss. When he stretched her further with a second finger her mind went blank as it felt like he was touching everywhere at once.

“Oh God! Vulpes! I...Oh god!” She screamed breaking apart as she came. Six pawed at the blanket and grabbed onto Vulpes shoulders as he kissed and sucked her breasts prolonging the pleasure. His name became a mumble as she whined trying to get away from the sensation until he stopped. Her body felt boneless as she caught her breath, even the soft press of his lips against her skin and breasts felt too much.

“Hey you.” Vulpes purred, his voice warm and affectionate as he looked down upon Six.

“Hey...me…” she replied kissing him gently.

“Better than that time in the shack?” He chuckled. “More intense than the book?”

“You knew?!” She squeaked covering her face.

“You were not as quiet as you thought and very focused.”

“Oh my god!” She rolled over curling up mortified. “I can’t...oh my god!”

“You looked beautiful then, even more so now.” He wrapped himself to her form, she stifled a moan feeling his hard cock against her back. He teased her back and shoulders with kisses and gently caressed her hips. “Tell me Six were you thinking of me then?”

“Y...yes…” she gasped leaning her head back and exposing her head more.

“I thought of you…” he nibbled her ear, whispering his honeyed words. “...and how you would come for me. I would have to return to my tent and relieve myself I was so hard.”

Six rolled to face him. Vulpes looked smug but a swift touch of her finger up the length of his cock changed it to pure pleasure. Six pushed him onto his back and followed, climbing over to straddle his hips. She trapped the hard length of his cock against her slit, her generous slick dripping onto him. Curious, Six rocked her hips dragging herself against the length of his cock.
She giggled when his hands flew to her hips stilling her, his lip bitten to stifle his moans.

“Something wrong dear?” she laughed.

“God's above no.” As she rocked again he moved with her and they both groaned.

“Vulpes I feel so empty.” She whined “Can we please … go further.” She blushed.

“If you are ready?” His concern was endearing. She nodded. “Raise yourself up.” He guided her higher with hands on her hips before lining his cock to her entrance but not entering. “Listen carefully, slowly lower yourself onto me. Go no faster than you need.”

Six nodded. Vulpes rested his hands upon her hips but did not apply any pressure. Slowly Six lowered herself pressing on the tip as the bulbous head broached her. She whined at the change in pressure as even that seemed to fill and stretch her. She gripped the meat of his forearms as an anchor. Vulpes kept to his word and didn't move and as she pressed lower it was like being split inside. She didn't realise she would change to accommodate him. Cass left that shit out of her stories. *How did Vulpes feel?* She looked down upon him and felt like the goddess he called her.

He watched her through hooded lids, mouth open and his grip was right on her hips.

“How did Vulpes feel?”

“Does it feel good?” She asked him sliding a little lower and he groaned.

“Are you serious?” He growled. “I should be asking you!”

“Pleassse.” She hissed. “Need to hear you.”

“You are so tight, so warm...gods I wish I could bury myself in you.”

“Test of patience.” She sighed as she sheathed him completely. “Fuck!” She cried pressing over her abdomen where she imagined his cock would be. “It feels like you're splitting me and I feel so full.” She gasped squeezing internally and Vulpes cried out.

“Shit!” He cried, “fuck that feels good.”

“Oh god I feel so full.” She hissed. “What do I do now?” She asked between heavy gasps.

“Lean forward…” he ran his fingers into her hair, pulling her close and kissing her sweetly. “There's no rush.” He flinched as she squeezed again. “Just relax” he purred kissing and nipping her lips his other hand caressing and teasing her breast as she got used to his girth. “You feel so good. So good.”

“Vulpes, I'm ready, I feel...I want…”

“Alright. Raise your hips,”

Six did lifting herself up slowly and dropping down gasping and clenching around Vulpes’ length. It felt good. It felt really good. Again she lifted herself and dropped down again, crying out when Vulpes latched onto her other breast as she slowly rode him. Six spoke and mumbled obscenities almost continually.

“Oh fuck...it feels good...oh god...so intense...Vulpes!” She cried as her hips began to move more fluidly. “Oh fuck, oh god. It's so good. Help me. Please.” She whined sitting back up spearing
him deeper. “It's like you're trying to bury yourself.”

“I'll guide you.” He grasped her hips lifting and rolling her hips with his movements as he began to thrust gently up into her. Her cries grew louder and harsher as she rolled her hips into his setting a steady quick rhythm. Everything felt good. She relished the intimacy and intensity. Kisses and teeth breaking their shared moans and gasps. All but too soon it was too much.

“I can't…” she panted leaning against his chest. “I can't do both, it's too much.”

“Lay on your back.” Vulpes asked helping her up, she whined at the sudden emptiness and wishing he was back inside. She felt incomplete. Following his guidance she lay on her back legs bent and spread as he settled between them. She shivered as two fingers rubbed from clit to cunt.

“I can't believe how wet you are.” He chuckled.

“I told you I wanted you, Vulpes. I meant every word.” She pulled him closer, pressing her chest to his. “I ache in your absence. I feel so empty.”

He pulled away and she felt the press of his cock against her entrance again.

“Let me remedy that then my wife.”

With one roll of her hips he sheathed himself inside her with one thrust. She arched and her breasts bounced with the force. Her moan loud but she felt no pain only pleasure. Her hands roamed his body caressing his shoulders, his chest his sides and neck. But as his thrusts grew rougher she held his shoulders tightly as he leaned over her prone form. In heated breaths they shared sweet words and hot kisses touching and exploring each other. Six decided that she liked kissing and enjoyed running her fingers through his hair and tugging him back into kisses. It was intimate and she felt that she was his and he was hers. It was becoming harder to tell where one began and the other ended.

Vulpes pulled back, taking her hand in his own and interlinking their fingers. Just like before Six marvelled at how such a small change could make such a difference. With his other hand guiding her hip he kept his quick pace rubbing against something pleasurable within.

“Eyes on me, Six.” she did as he asked focusing on his face only breaking eye contact to look down between them. Six watched in awe as Vulpes licked his thumb before pressing it against her clit. Six screamed and writhed. It was too much, like fire burning through her body. She bucked and squeezed and thrashed under him the sensation too much. “Look at me…” a plea not a command. Six forced her eyes open afraid Vulpes would be angry that she was moving so much. Instead she met his gaze and he looked pleased and proud at her reaction a genuine smile on his lips. “It’s ok, writhe all you want, it feels fucking fantastic.” he growled.

“I can’t…it’s too intense…” she whimpered shaking her head as he rubbed in small circles. “It’s too good.”

“All right.” he stopped moving his thumb and pulled out, sitting back on his heels. The pleasurable high she had been riding dropped and she felt unsatisfied, empty. “Something wrong?” he asked impassively as she rocked her hips against the air.

“Please Vulpes…” she asked, embarrassed. “Don’t tease…” 
“But I thought you wanted me to stop?” she muttered something under her breath. He smirked pressing his thumb against her clit. “What was that dear?”

“Please fuck me...” she gasped as he ran his slick cock through her juices running it along her slit without penetrating. “Oh god...plea...se...” she whined. Vulpes picked up her thighs encouraging her to wrap them around his waist. “No more slow.” she begged. “I need you badly.”

“As the lady wishes.”

Vulpes lined himself up and slid in with a single thrust his thumb rubbing tight circles her body thrown straight back into hot pleasure as she arched against him rocking her hips to meet his thrusts. Vulpes was bent over her mouth peppering her breasts with kisses and bites roughly to her skin marking her with purple bruises.

“Oh fuck, oh yes.” she gasped as he thrusts grew rougher and deeper. “Vulpes I’m gonna...”

“I know.” he growled biting her neck trying to stave off his own completion. “Scream my name, scream it so they hear you in the banquet.”

A few more thrusts and the damn broke. Six screamed Vulpes name into the cool night rocking to his touch and he prolonged her own orgasm. She needed his touch. She needed connection and peppered his face with kisses as his movements grew erratic, his fingers leaving her clit to tangle in the sheets.

“Six...” he growled against her neck as he pressed deep and held there. Six hummed at the wet feeling against her walls as he filled her, his hips rocking gently pressing her as close as possible. For a few quiet minutes she held him and he wrapped himself to her holding each other as they came down from her high. Six shivered as she felt the first drop of his slick seep out. Vulpes gave her a quizzical look.

“You’re leaking out.” she said not keeping his gaze and he grinned. “Thank you. That was...perfect.” she sighed.

He pulled back to watch himself leak from her folds.

“I agree.” he kissed her sweetly pulling her into an embrace; lying side by side cuddling. “However it came to be, I am glad you are my wife. We are going to achieve great things together.”


“Noted.”

“Vulpes?”

“Yes?”

“Will you show me more?”

“Every damn day if I can help it.”

“Good. I’m glad we feel the same. What does the wine specifically do?”

“Why?”
“Explain first, reasons later.”

“Well it relaxes the drinker with an aphrodisiac it makes a woman slick,” he ran a finger up her dripping slit and she shuddered. “and it makes the man hard and both parties eager for release. Now, tell me why.” Six blushed hiding her face against his neck. **Perhaps he would find it a strange request?” “Is it that bad?” he asked.**

“You might think I’m...a profligate.”

“My dear, you are my wife. Lust for your husband is considered a good trait.”

“Well, I thought perhaps...maybe we could both drink some of the wine and … um … discover each other more?” she blushed. She desired more as her body overcame the initial wave of fatigue. Since tasting the pleasure and joy of being touched, she found herself craving more.

“Hmmmm.” he mused. “I think I could be persuaded. Before that, I’d like to go without.” he guided her hand to his sticky length that was already half hard. “Want to try another position?” he teased tracing around her nipple.

Six agreed enthusiastically.

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_Gods she was so responsive._ Vulpes grinned as he turned her onto her front raising her hips as she rested her head on the mattress. Six shivered as he ran a hand possessively down her spine.

“Mine.” he growled as she watched him over her shoulder.

“Yours.” she replied.

He pressed himself against her dripping slit, their combined juices dripping down her thigh. He spread her pussy apart and rubbed his length up and down her slit.

“I rather like seeing my cum dripping out of you.” he growled. “Claiming you inside and out…” he hummed stroking and caressing her sides and back. “All mine.” Six whined as he knocked against her clit. He gripped the back of her neck, not painfully so, but as a reminder.

“All yours, as you are mine, don’t forget.” she purred wiggling against him. “I want you Vulpes. Fuck me, please. I’ve waited so long.”

Vulpes pressed a kiss against her back before tilting and pressing into her slowly. He had to pause as Six tightened around him every sensation fresh and new for her which heightened his desire. He wanted more. He stopped as he pressed as deep as he could go.

“Vulpes, it’s even deeper.”

“What is? Let me hear you say it.” he gasped trying to keep his cool as she gripped him.

“Your cock. Your cock is so deep!” she moaned. “It feels so very good.”

“It gets better.” he grit out as he began to fuck her deep and slow. “God, you’re so tight.” he let his
hands roam to grasp her hips as her knees gave way. Each time he thrust she whined his name and urged him to take her harder. He gladly gave. He fucked her harder his hips slamming into hers as he smacked her ass roughly. “That’s for calling me a pervert.” he chuckled slapping the other cheek. He could feel his orgasm growing quickly, he wanted to fuck and fill her with his seed and claim her as his. He wanted the whole Legion to hear his wife scream his name and that the immortal courier was his. He withdrew swiftly gripping the base of his cock trying to stem the sudden surge of pleasure. Six collapsed onto her side looking up at him coyly her face red and glazed with sweat.

“I was so close.” she whined.

“As was I, but I don’t want it to end yet.”

“Tease.”

“I can’t help it when you make me feel so good..” He pulled her up and slowly entered her again determined to keep his movements slow and steady.

“Not fair,” she whined. “When you put it like that… it makes me...happy.” she gasped as he moved slow and deep. He reached around until he found her slit clit with his fingers. “OH FUCK!” she shrieked her body tightening around him. “Please Vulpes.”

Before, he had preferred his partners to be quiet. Profligate women he seduced for work were often loud and garish. When seeking someone for his own pleasure he preferred the quiet and gentle noises that were less whorish and fake. Yet slaves, in fear of their lives no doubt, would often be loud to try and appease their master. He had resigned himself to dissatisfaction. But with Six it was different. She was expressive, not just squealing and screeching mindlessly. When he teased the head of his cock against her entrance she whimpered and gasped so softly her lip bitten trying to trap her noises. He loved how she warred with herself. Then when he thrust deeply she became more vocal calling his name or making noises to show her pleasure but it wasn’t and endless drone. She responded to his actions. Only he could draw out those noises and it made each of them more precious. His favourite sound was his name. She said it with reverence, with a breathy gasp and surprisingly, adoration. She truly wanted him. He hadn’t experience true affection for many years. If she said his name like that for the rest of their lives he’d die a happy man.

“That’s it,” he praised. Stroking her clit gently as he slammed into her harder. “Just feel good,” he ordered before circling her clit harder. Her cunt spasmed around him, her body taut as she whined and pressed back.

“Oh please Vulpes. I’m going to come. It’s too intense.”

“Please.” he asked and he felt her tighten impossibly as she came and he was going to wring every drop of pleasure from her. He came with a snarl pressing deep inside as he emptied himself within her. Vulpes rolled aside trying not to crush her with his weight, but he was panting heavily blinded by his own pleasure.

“You’re leaking out again.” Six mumbled sleepily, rolling to face him. “It feels strange.”
“I’m sorry. Let me help.” he chuckled gathering their essence and pressing it back inside. He held two fingers within her, his thumb gently teasing.

“Nooooo.” she whined pushing him away. “I need a rest.” he smiled content at her embarrassed blush. He cleaned his fingers on the sheet.

“That felt great. I like that too,” she smiled. “But I like being able to see you.”

“Duly noted.”

“I want to do more…” she mumbled sleepily.

“Rest first, then maybe we can play some more.”

“Alright…” she replied eyes half closed. “Finally...all mine…”

For a while, he lay and watched her sleep. He had seen her nightmares and the frustration and fear that crossed her features while she slept. Tonight in his arms, she looked peaceful and relaxed. The tension was gone from her face and she looked content. Was this affection?

“I swear Six, I will protect you, honour you and do everything in my power to make our future. I want you by my side.” he froze as she mumbled in her sleep snuggling closer. “I agree, my dear one.”
Honeymoon

Chapter Summary

It is the morning after the wedding and a new dawn rises for Vulpes and Six.

Chapter Notes

Sorry it has been so long everyone, my new class this year have been a bit of a handful and drained a lot of energy. Thankfully things are improving and I have energy again. The morning after the night before.

Consciousness came back slowly to Six along with dull aches and pains. Light had begun to light and warm the tent in the sun but she wasn’t sure on what hour it exactly was. A soft grumble beside her signalled her husband stirring from slumber. Sleepily she rolled to face Vulpes slumbering form. He looked peaceful so she snuggled against him; wrinkling her nose at the seed that still leaked from her.

After a discussion the previous night, they had agreed each to try a sip of the wine. Enough to light a fire but enough to keep their minds. Six felt her skin heat as she remembered the hunger it brought out in them. They had fucked twice more in quick succession each time more roughly as they let the fire consume them. She still felt so full where he had emptied inside her, she smiled to herself. Perhaps Caesar would get his wish earlier than expected.

Through it all Vulpes had been kind. Ensuring her comfort and mutual pleasure. If the attendees in the banquet hadn’t heard them before, they certainly did then. For the first time in a while she felt content. The burdens placed on her shoulders were far away and she actually for once felt the peace of home.

“Good Morning…” grumbled Vulpes, rubbing the sleep from his eyes. “You look thoroughly ravished.”

“I feel ravished too dear husband.” she chuckled nuzzling against his chest. He drew her up with a gentle finger under her chin to kiss her softly. Both of them savouring each other in a slow languid kiss.

“We should get dressed. Mercia will come to get us soon.”

“For the final part?”
“I need to thank Caesar for the gift and we burn the sheet as an offering for you to be fertile.”

“You know that’s not how it works right?”

“We give what the Gods ask of us and what is expected. Though I agree your medicine may be more immediate in its effect. The men expect and need something to believe in.”

“I understand. We’ll burn all the sheets you want.” she chuckled becoming hysterical as Vulpes tickled her.

“Please don’t. I don’t have many.”

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Vulpes enjoyed watching Six in the morning. She was still dazed and unguarded; her hair was loose and unravelled. He admired her in the dull light, the previous night had been more than he had expected and like a profligate, he found himself wanting more. If the priest wasn’t arriving soon he would take great pleasure in exploring her more. Perhaps later. He stood from the bed and retrieved a damp cloth with water from the dresser. He efficiently cleaned himself before rinsing the cloth and returning to Six. Gently he pressed her thighs apart and she allowed him. She flinched at the first touch of the cool cloth on her sensitive folds but he was as gentle and thorough as he could be.

“Thank you.” she sighed as he discarded the cloth and brought over her clothes.

“You’re welcome. Can you dress?”

Six nodded in reply and lazily grabbed for her bra and underwear. There was no point her wearing the garters again he mused. Though he made sure they were tucked away safely in his armour; he wanted another viewing. As he finished tying his armour on Six asked for his help zipping her into her dress. As he worked the zip up slowly he was kissing his way to her shoulder when there was a polite cough behind him.

“I’m sorry my Lord, but the Priest is waiting to inspect.”

“Alright Mercia,” he replied.

“We’ll take our time later.” she promised and he intended to take her up on her offer.

The short walk to the main tent was more muted that the dramatic theatrics of yesterday. She brushed her hand against his, affection being given freely before they would have to fall into their roles. Six had chosen to leave her hair down and lose, her marked neck and swollen lips reminders of their shared passion. He held open the tent as the couple returned, the priest and Caesar waiting at the throne, the fire pit set up in the open centre of the tent. The few revelers who were awake sat around eating a simpler breakfast and nursing hangovers. He walked ahead Six staying a few steps behind him, her gaze lowered. A prime example of submission.
Max gave him a wicked grin and a thumbs up as Vulpes crossed the room. He couldn't help but shared a victorious grin.

“Vale Vulpes and his new bride.”

“Vale Lord Caesar. I must thank you for your generous gift of this wife. She greatly pleased me last night. She will bring me many sons.”

“I accept your thanks. Priest, go do what you must.”

“I will.”

“See to it Mercia is rewarded. Her assistance was perfect.”

“Yes Lord Vulpes.” Replied the holy man, heading to check their marital bed.

“Tell me Courier,” commanded Caesar. “Is Vulpes as barbaric in bed so much that you would lose your tongue?”

“No my Lord, my husband was just so vigorous last night that I find myself still dazed by the pleasure he gave me. My hips ache.”

If Vulpes didn't have control over his actions he would almost blush. He knew her purpose to make him seem virile and commanding but he was a private man. He noticed her smile as if dazed towards Lanius, meeting his gaze and repeating “very vigorous.” Like the cat that got the cream. Ah that was her play.

He gripped her wrist tightly in warning. A subtle method of control and she stopped and watched him before apologising and stepping behind him.

“Already training her?” Chuckled Caesar.

“Yes, but I rather like her willful nature. Far more interesting and certainly fulfilling to punish.” Vulpes replied as Six pressed against his back.

“How much longer?” She whispered just loud enough he could hear.

“No more than an hour.” He replied as if cooing to his nervous wife. “Why”

“I'm leaking.” She whined.

“What?”

“Your seed is leaking down my thigh.” She hissed low and mortified.

“Oh.”

“Oh indeed. I don't want to leave a puddle.”
“My Lord!” Bellowed the infernal priest brandishing the sheet like a crazed washer woman. “It is good news! The sheets are pink, this will be a very fruitful union.”

“WOuld you believe it! The virtuous Courier was as innocent as her deeds. Almost makes me regret not tasting you myself!” roared Caesar, he felt Six cringe behind him.

“I doubt anyone did with her sharp tongue and penchant for murder.” Vulpes laughed. “No wonder you were so tight.”

He held back a hiss as her nails dug into the top of his hand.

“Either way, she is yours Vulpes.” Caesar concluded. “You best get to work making him sons, Courier so he doesn’t get bored and test his potions on you.”

Vulpes took the cloth from the priest and walked out to the fire pit outside the temple. Caesar and Max followed but the others remained within.

“We offer you this sacrifice Aphrodite, to bless this marriage with Sons and Juno to strengthen the marriage bond. My next kills I dedicate to Mars and pray for many sons.”

Six stood silent beside Vulpes as he lowered the fabric into the flames. The priest added his own prayers before the ceremony drew to a close.

“Well then, I must insist you go to your wedding feast. I heard the men had something special prepared. All those new rations seemed to get their spirits up.”

“If you are sure my Lord?”

“I have a headache, go make me some heirs.”

-------------

Finally the pomp and circumstance was over. As they walked down the hill towards the Frumentarii camp Six remained quiet as Max and Vulpes caught up. The fatigue of pretending to be subdued and desperately clenching to stop Vulpes leaking out and brought back the fatigue of the previous night. Max asked probing questions under the guise of back up husband training and even she couldn’t resist the chuckle as the old friends bantered.

“You’re awfully quiet Six.” commented Max. “He didn’t really take your tongue?”

“No, just tired.” she replied. “Tired and sticky.”
“You dog!!” roared Max punching Vulpes on the arm.

“Vulpes, may I go to the kitchen to check the rations?” She wanted to make sure Caesar had followed through their bargain.

“You must be introduced to the men formally at breakfast.”

“Please? I’ll be quick.”

“Alright, return to the tent as soon as you can.”

Six nodded eagerly briskly walking away as the two friends continued to the centre of camp. The mess tent was placed towards the edge of camp along with the food stores. No one wanted to sleep near the rotting food. The kitchen was ran by an older man called Felix who had lost his edge in the field but was a dab hand at cooking. Better than the fresh recruits at least who seemed to burn everything.

“Felix!” Six called out as she approached the tent. The sides of the tent were still tied down so he musnt be ready with the food.

“Courier? You’re here early.” he replied appearing from the stock tent.

“Caesar had a headache so he let us go. He said the new rations arrived.”

The jovial look on the cook’s face dropped. She had known that things were too good to be true.

“It’s true they’ve arrived but...I don’t know what I expected to be honest.”

“Let me see.” she replied stepping into the tent.

The older man stepped aside, running his hands through his greying hair. He seemed quite
anxious. He pointed to the crate in the centre of the tent and she headed over. The food was still inferior to what she had eaten on her travels, but where was the meat both fresh and dried? She had seen Lanius’ men have all sorts available to them and based on the feast yesterday they were not short of food.

“Is that it?” she replied running her hands through the inferior maize. The rusted cans probably meant the food inside was spoiled too. “That’s the better rations?” her voice got louder.

“Technically it’s the best we’ve had for a while.” he replied. “It’s a great improvement.”

“Not in my books.” she snarled. “I was promised you’d be fed better.”

“You did what?”

“Oh. Shit. You heard nothing.” she realised, Vulpes probably wouldn’t appreciate her bargain being known. “Still this isn’t good enough for today. I will talk to my husband.” she replied.

“I don’t want you to get in trouble with any of them on the hill.”

“I won’t, trust me.”

Six bid Felix farewell and stormed back towards the centre of the camp. The small crowd gathered around the entrance to Vulpes tent reminded her that there were roles to play and her anger would have to wait. Six weaved between the laughing and wolf whistling men to the front where she dashed into Vulpes side like a frightened kitten.

“They know you’re not afraid.” Vulpes stated as Six relaxed.

“Not yet anyway!” roared a voice from the back. “She hasn’t done the washing yet!”

Six couldn’t help but laugh.

“Was everything alright?” Vulpes asked.
“No, can we please discuss it after?” she replied not wanting to cause a scene in front of his men. She knew her temper was bubbling.

“Alright. Then introductions it is.” Vulpes turned to face his men. “Men I present my wife, Courier Six, who will bear my sons and secure me as Caesar’s heir. Treat her with respect she is not a slave and may I remind you she made a man crawl the length on New Vegas on the stumps of his legs before executing him. She knows how to retaliate.”

“Seems like she’ll fit right in. Though can she get the stains out?”

“I have yet to find out.” he chuckled.

“What about the sheet? We couldn’t get close.” called another.

“We want the news!”

“Will the gods finally get off their arses?”

“The sheets were...pink.”

“AWWW YESSSS!” cheered the men.

“See,” Vulpes whispered to her. “It may be mumbo jumbo, but to them we just gave them hope.”

“Such a clever fox.” she replied kissing him.

“Make sure any duties that need to be completed as high priority are done, then I declare the rest of today as a holiday to celebrate. Felix I’m sure is working on the feast, I have my own to enjoy first.”

------------

He could tell Six was angry, the subtle tension in her movements and the tightness in her smile
encouraged him to get her alone quickly. Last thing he needed was her exploding and causing a scene.

“What’s wrong?” he demanded, better to lance the wound than let it fester.

“Caesar cheated me. The rations are better than before but still worse than the others!” she snapped low aware of the men outside. “They deserve better, I mean look at all the food last night!”

“I expected as much.” he replied.

“Well I’m not having it!” she snapped. “I need permission to go and get some decent fucking food for the Frumentarii feast.”

Vulpes frowned. He didn’t really want her to leave, her unexpected absence would cause a stir but an irate wife would also have consequences. Maybe marriage would be harder than he thought.

“We can solve this after we get cleaned up.” he replied. “You can’t leave just yet. It’s as fair as I can be right now.”

“We will talk about this though?”

“Yes.”

“Good.” replied Six with a grin. “Now get naked so I can ogle you.”

------

Vulpes really was good at sex, Six mused to herself as she lay in his arms. Her anger had quickly taken a back burner when he touched her so easily getting lost in feeling. Her husband lay beside her in the morning heat, watching her with great interest, like he was trying to figure her out. Six rolled to her side so she could touch him, her hunger for contact not diminished at all. Now she decided to be intimate with someone it was if the dam that held back her loneliness had broken and she needed to feel something again.
“Enjoying yourself.” he asked low, still watching her intently.

“Yes, very much so.” she smiled. “I just can’t help myself.”

“I’m not complaining.” he returned her touch, arm wrapped around her possessively. “What did you have in mind for the rations?”

“I thought perhaps I could teleport to New Vegas? Pull in some favours and get some meat and proper quality food, maybe some wine from the 38. That would be good for a wedding feast wouldn’t it? It would cheer the men up?”

“It would, I think I can allow that. But long term? You can’t beat up Caesar, he technically kept his bargain.”

“Technically.” she mocked.

“That’s the area us Frumentarii work in, that grey area between right and wrong.”

“I understand that.” she replied, her hands pressed against his chest. He leaned forward to kiss her sweetly in reassurance, but she pressed close seeking more. “Could I perhaps hunt?”

“Go on,”

“We both know I am likely to get stir crazy. I’d hope you’d give me things to do; I need to feel useful.”

“I did have some ideas, yes.”

“Well maybe I could sneak out the back entrance sometimes and go hunting for meat. We know I’m good at it, Felix could make some into jerky and the rest into something fresh. That way we get better rations?”
“That sounds reasonable, but you should go with someone.”

“I can take care of myself.” she replied petulantly

“I know, but I want you to come back safe and someone has to carry it all.”

“Oooh my own slave.”

“Just don’t tell him that.” he smiled. “We will make it work.” he sighed.

“Not as easy as you thought?”

“You were never easy.” he purred kissing her deeply.

“Just because I was innocent!” she giggled.

“You weren’t.” he replied. “You were tight, but not a virgin.”

“Oh, so…”

“I don’t know what explains your private areas.” he blushed. “It’s not for men to know. Just, that it created an illusion and I’m not about to change their minds.”

“Why?”

“Because me taking your ‘virginity’ cements my ownership and you are mine.”

“Ahhh Vuples, you clever man.”

“Always.”
Six had sneaked away soon after, promising a swift return with many gifts. Vulpes had taken the time to bathe and look through the notes and reports he had missed in the madness of the last few days. Like his men, when the essentials were done he put them away and stepped out to socialise with his men. He could observe their interactions and how well they managed their tells. If no one in the Legion supported them then they would have to rely on each other and that would require some bonding.

A few jeered and wolf whistled as left the tent and took a drink from Max. It seemed Felix had broken open his home brewed liquor. The last time they had opened one of Felix’s home brew was when his predecessor had a heart attack and they celebrated his acceptance of the role. He still had black spots in his memory from the incident.

He could indulge himself, he thought. It was his honeymoon after all.

Six rematerialised an hour or so later with four create behind her. In their drunk state at least three fell off the logs around the fire and one man threw up. Even Vulpes as he stood to meet his wife swayed. Felix certainly knew how to make alcohol.

“Honey, I’m home.” Six waved as Vulpes pulled her into a sloppy but passionate kiss. “Oh my god you smell like booze.”

“Blame Felix.” he grinned. “Blame you for looking so ravishing.” he kissed her again. “God I could just bend you over the crates right now.”

Six looked at him as if he had grown another head before giggling and escaping from his grip. I’ll let Felix know the real rations are here.

“Real rations?” queried Max.

“Not the half hearted shit you’re used to. Who want’s some deathclaw steak?”

The men cheers and chanted Six’s name. Their hero of the hour as she ran off no doubt to speak to Felix.

“Vulpes, boss.” Max pestered his friend. “I gotta say, thank fuck you picked her ‘cause that piece
of ass just got us some decent dinner and that ass…”

“That ass is mine!” he snapped, alcohol cutting his tolerance for bullshit incredibly. “She is mine.” he mused over the thought a smile growing as the thought took root. “She’s mine.”

Six returned breathless with Felix in tow and talked him through the contents of each box. Her eyes constantly flicked back to his noting his stare. The chef walked around the fire kicking the most able into dragging the crates back to the mess tent and only two hurled on the floor. Max offered her a bottle of beer and made room for her on the log. Feeling childish he wrapped her in an embrace pulling her tight to his side. The ‘mine’ was implied.

“Seems like you guys have been having a great party.”

“Oh yeah, Vulpes even smiled. He must be relaxed.” mocked Max. “We haven’t had a lucky break like this since...well.... A while.”

“Nipton? Camp Searchlight?” she offered.

“Those were professional victories but the Frumentarii as a whole getting honours and treated a little less shitty. Priceless.”

“What Max means is those were my victories and only I gained favour.” clarified Vulpes his thumbs stroking her hip as he nuzzled against her neck. She smelled so good.

“That is shitty.”

A moment of serenity passed over Vulpes as his best friend and wife conversed. Six was comfortable and happy in her role as his wife and he found himself not missing his solitude. The men seemed happier in general and were treating Six like their new pet, teasing and joking with her. He supposed at least due to working with the profligates they knew how to act around a woman. Already he could start to see new moves and actions he could take to ensure Legion victory and doorways opened and he felt reinvigorated in his mission.

And perhaps, at the end of his campaign, he could retire with Six to Flagstaff or the 38 and build a family both securing his position and ensuring his name would survive. Six looked up to Vulpes questioningly, such a sweet prize and one he would savour. He kissed her until she forgot her
concern and she lay back in his arms. Such a needy wife.

“All of this is ours Six.” he whispered to her. “We are going to achieve something world changing you and I. Nothing will stand in our way.”

“Just Vulpes and Six, tearing up the desert.” she replied.

“All our enemies will burn.”

It was her turn to kiss him in celebration.

Chapter End Notes

Thank you for reading, I hope you enjoyed it. That ends Arc one of the story and the birth of a power couple that will change the future of the desert.

The next chapter will begin the second Arc, and will take place about 7 months later when the world starts to change.

Mojave Indulgences (which are my kinktober works starring these two) mostly take place in the time skip and some later on in the story. Mainly I just wanted them to bang and at times fluffy.
7 months later

Chapter Notes

Hey everyone, I hope that you are well.

This is the start of Arc 2. I wanted to do some scene and context setting so I could get straight into the action. So a short chapter today but there is more coming.

Life had passed quickly in the desert, yet despite the endlessly changing wasteland, not much had changed in the life of Courier Six. Within the ranks of the Frumentarii she had found comrades and a larger family to call her own.

Everyday, Six would begin by collecting Vulpes’ and her own meal from Felix in the mess tent. Since she had been given permission to hunt by her husband the quality of rations had greatly improved and the chef always made sure she had a healthy portion. Once they had eaten, if they were not feeling playful Vulpes would go to work and Six did chores around the tent. She didn’t mind doing things like washing and cleaning. In a way they were not demanding so she had more time to make plans and design schematics in her head.

Again, at lunchtime, she would retrieve his meals and then mend armour and equipment as it turned out she was the best at the camp. She had a backlog the size of a mountain to do as once they decided her work was good all of the Frumentarii wanted her to mend their things. Six didn’t mind, it made her valuable in their eyes and on had gotten some to show her respect early on. It wasn’t until her medical skills were put to the test that the men truly warmed to her.

One of the men had been mauled by dogs near the fort. When he was brought in the soldiers merely began the funeral prayers. Six would have none of that. She treated the wounds for hours battling to save the man’s life. Thankfully he lived, albeit horribly scarred, but all the men treated her better after that point.

Afternoons were spent on her training. It seemed Vulpes had grander intentions for her other than hunting and healing. Not that Six minded, she found his lessons fascinating as well as grim. Her hand to hand combat was steadily improving; though at times they could get distracted. Her ability to use poisons and other less reputable tools of persuasion was also improving but at a much slower pace. She wasn’t used to torturing people, but the academic side of her marvelled at how such small things could break a person. In the evening when they all met and socialised the men had begun to take turns teaching her their own little tricks and tips.

And at night…

Vulpes was as desperate for contact as she. As soon as night fell it was a countdown to who caved in first and dragged the other to the tent. They were constantly seeking more. She couldn’t really call it making love, even when they were being tender with each other there was no discussion of love or even deeper feelings. Six was content with what she had and if there was going to be declarations of love or adoration, she would wait until he was ready.

The steady routine and friendships helped settle Six, she didn’t worry about the Mojave or the factions or even her companions. Yes man would tick over nicely until her command changed and
her days had purpose. For once she dared to think that she was happy.

But as with all things, there were good days and there were bad ones.

Days where Vulpes would come home angry and work late into the night at his computer and in his files. Six learned quickly on those days he was best left alone. Max would frequently visit when Vulpes withdrew within himself supporting him until the problem was solved. Six would sleep alone those nights.

The days they celebrated were often the best, Six would catch a great feast and they would all eat and talk and be merry. Most days were average, but as the months passed the problems that seemed to plague the Frumentarii only increased in number and the new recruits were useless.

But still they remained together.

He held her when her nightmares and fears took hold, and she cared when he felt at his lowest. A little hardship could not fracture them.

Lanius however, was growing bolder, sending open insults and taunting Six. Caesar’s presence and good health kept him in check but they both knew he was beginning to tug at his leash more frequently. Vulpes, Six and Max had frequent debates on the subject but it always came to a stalemate. Six believed they should have a contingency for the Frumentarii to flee to should Caesar die and Lanius take over. She knew that the Legate would not allow them to live. Vulpes and Max, as true legionaries, had faith in Caesar’s health and that Lanius would not dare eradicate them as Vulpes was his favourite. Outnumbered Six withdrew her argument. But each time Lanius flexed his boundaries the topic came up again and again.

Still one thing was for sure, no one was willing to make the first move.
Holy Moly this took a while but I am finally happy with it! After some ups and downs it came into being.

Remember it is 7 months later now. Oh times are a changing!

I hope you like it!

Six stretched in the heated midday sun. She was due a visitor, however he was already late and she was beginning to get annoyed. That would not bode well for him. With a heavy sigh she looked over to the communications tent where Max was. Her friend pointed to his watch and he shook his head. This was not the first useless recruit they had been sent, it was becoming a rather mundane routine. After another ten minutes she finally spotted the young man traipsing down the hillside with a swagger to his gait. Six sighed, she could tell this would not be a good day.

“Hello!” she waved as the new recruit searched the camp. “Over here.”

The sneer on the man was obvious as he strode towards her like a puffed up brahmin. Just another meathead sent to frustrate them.

“What? Are you so short handed that a slave has to see me.”

“Watch it.” she snapped. “My reputation for violence precedes me and my husband would be rather offended you called me slave.”

“Whatever. I know who you are. Just another profligate whore who fell for the Legion. Lanius always wondered how much Vulpes paid to get in that….”

WHAM!

With a single punch Six knocked back the legionary who clutched his jaw. His curses fell on deaf ears as she aimed lower catching him in the gut. She was impressed, this one had stamina. As the legionnaire recovered she skirted around him wrapping her arm around his neck and she began to squeeze, choking the new recruit. His fingers clawed at her, but Six was prepared, her thick leather coat prevented his nails gaining purchase in her skin.

“That’s it… it’s not personal, not really. Well, maybe a little.” she sighed. “If you hadn’t called me a whore then we could have had a chat over some tea. Now? Now you’re gonna help me with my lessons.”

The Legionary slumped in her grip as he finally passed out and she dropped him like a rock. For good measure she kicked him in the gut,

“Hey Max! I need your muscles!”

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The Legionary wasn’t very subtle when he awoke. All of the Frumentarii she had met explained that when in enemy territory they should wake quietly and assess their surroundings. Instead his violent shaking of the table and muffled curses filled the silence of the tent.

“Well aren’t you the heavy sleeper.” she laughed arranging her tools in front of her on the table.

The table shook some more behind her.

“There is no point fighting it.” she called over her shoulder. “Vulpes was very efficient in his explanation of knots.” Still more shaking behind her.

Six sighed turning to face the table behind her. It really seemed like this fellow was a particularly dumb shit with the amount of fighting and arguing he did despite being bound and gagged. Pushing away from her work table she moved into her captive’s line of view. The disrespectful Legionnaire glared at her. In retaliation she poked the swelling under his eye.

“Now that we’ve been formally introduced, I thought you should know that we find you lacking. You won’t become a Frumentarii, especially with that attitude.” she smiled poking the bruise roughly. “However you are the lucky winner of an all expenses paid, front row seat to… Six practices torturing villainous scum!” she mock cheered and clapped.

The Legionary just screamed.

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Another busy morning of planning and maneuvering his men in the field. There had been a lull in any sort of activity in the strip but he couldn’t get to the root cause of why. The NCR were being conservative in their military movements other than at HELIOS one. Routes into the facility were so far elusive, bar using his wife as cover. But even then it was risky. No, for the moment he would focus on the dam and continue to get men infiltrated in the ranks there.

He turned when he heard the soft rustle of fabric. Six stepped in quietly, two bowls in hand. Her hair was wet and braided back. Why had she needed to bathe?

“Oh Vulpes,” she smiled when she realised he was there. “I’m not late with lunch am I?”

“Not at all.” he stretched his neck languidly. “Why the wet hair?” he asked seating himself at their dining table.

“Your new recruit arrived and let’s just say while insulting the Frumentarii he may have called me a whore and slagged you off. So as defective goods, he’s been helping me practice the new interrogation skills from our last lesson.”

“And? How did they go?”

“Still not perfect, I punctured something by accident. He’s still alive but I got messy. Didn’t want to ruin lunch.” she replied between bites.

“Did you bind him tightly?”

“Yes, I used triple loops on each leg, with the extra rough hemp. I’ll give him credit, he’s got stamina.”

Vulpes continued to quiz Six over her actions as they ate. She was a quick and intuitive learner who practiced her craft diligently. He had overseen her tuition personally and despite his fear she
would find this aspect distasteful. Six participated enthusiastically. He had asked her one day about why she took to it so well. She had merely replied that anyone he brought for them to work on would be his enemy, therefore hers too. He watched her as she ate still trying to unpick and figure out his doting little wife. But she was a contradiction to his expectations.

“All done?” she asked diligently cleaning away the plates. He closed the gap between them pulling her flush against his front.

“I think I have room for desert.” he growled nipping her neck. Six leaned into his touch.

“Oh? Do you now?” she teased pulling away to perch on the edge of the table. “I don’t know...,” she tapped her chin thoughtfully. “What if you get a stomach ache?”

“I think I can cope.” he growled pushing her further onto the table.

Six automatically wrapped her legs around him, ever eager for him. Her desire never ceased as she hummed her approval as he kissed her.

“Why did you have to wear trousers today?” he growled undoing her shoes and tossing them behind him.

“I didn’t want the recruit to get the wrong idea.”

“True, I would hate for him to see this.” he growled tugging her trousers off as she shimmied her underwear down and flicked it off.

“What about you dear husband? Aren’t you going to take off that blasted tunica so I can ogle you freely?” she replied tossing her shirt and bra aside.

“No time, I’ve been too busy stripping you.” he chuckled, kissing her when she protested.

Vulpes groaned at the feel of her wet heat against his fingers. His mouth trailed down to her breast where he sucked harshly on her nipples as he pressed his fingers into her tight heat. Thumb pressed on her clit, he rubbed and finger fucked her as he marked her chest with new love bites. He liked to mark his territory.

“Come on Vulpes,” she whined grabbing at his tunica. “Take it off.”

“Touch yourself.” he growled pulling away as he loosened the ties on his own clothing. “I’m not made of hands, touch yourself.”

“Sarcasm doesn’t befit you.” She teased back at him as she let her fingers trace over her body and slit.

He enjoyed watching her touch herself knowing that it was him she thought of and the honest expression she wore. Six often hid her true self just like he did, but when she came apart it was her in her most purest form. He tossed his tunica aside and kicked away his boxers stepping closer to her. Six opened her legs to welcome him, pulling him close and he ground against her wet slit.

“Hmmm,” she hummed against his kiss. “You feel so good.”

Vulpes tipped himself to press against her entrance. The slow press inside her was his own slice of heaven on earth. Her warm, welcoming heat enveloped him as pressed in deep. With a gentle touch to her chin he pulled her into a soft, sensual kiss.
He kept her pulled close against him as he fucked her slow and deep. They kissed, tongues teasing each other. He ran his fingers through her damp hair. She mewled and gripped his shoulders tightly the bite of her nails extra stimulation. He could stay like this endlessly.

“You feel like heaven. So warm and tight.” He hissed as she rolled her hips to meet him. “There is no better feeling than this.”

“Flattery will get you everything.” She purred. “I love feeling you inside me. I love feeling you come deep inside me and when you press your cum back inside.” She whined. “Kiss me?”

Vulpes pushed her back on the table spreading her thighs apart further as he increased pace. He tried to memorise everything. How she gripped the top of the table with one hand as the other trailed down his chest. How her breasts bounced as he fucked her and the look of pure lust she gave him.

“Touch your clit for me.” He asked

Her free hand traced down to the apex of her thighs as she teased tight circles around her clit her tight heat clamping down around him. With a hushed cry she came arching off the table when she looked her most beautiful and vulnerable as he stretched out her orgasm.

“Come on Vulpes,” she gasped. “Fill me.”

It was too much, a few more stuttered thrusts and he began to come within her. She pulled him down on top of her kissing his pinched brow gently as he came down from his high.

“Good?” He asked.

“Wonderful, the best dessert I could want”

“Hmmmm flattery will get you anything.” He chuckled sucking a rough mark on her breast. “Now, how about we work on that recruit together?”

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Husband and Wife torture lessons, not the most romantic gift but highly educational.

“A good start.” Vulpes commented appraising her work. “Did you try physical intimidation first?”

“Yes, I started with the gut and kidneys but he was quite resilient so I moved to small tender areas. That also didn't work out so I went to the table. I tried some small needlework but still he held it together. But sadly I burst something.” She gestured to the bloodstain on the dirt floor. “I was thinking poisons next.”

“Ah, a personal favourite.”

Vulpes went to his special leather case unbuckling the worn leather lock and opening the two halves of the bag. Inside were rows of meticulously labelled vials and pouches of unknown substances. The smell was pleasantly aromatic despite the insidious contents within. Six watched patiently as he thoughtfully selected some of the larger, fuller vials. He readied a tray all laid out in methodical, clinical neatness. In these times her lover was gone and instead she was accompanied by the cold, calculating Frumentarius who directed his men so effectively in their terror campaign. Unlike vicious Vulpes who tore people apart with his ripper, this Vulpes was quieter and calmer in his pursuit. She could imagine any victim on that table facing a relentless, unwavering interrogator. She hoped she never ended up there.
“These are the most common poisons we have. Barkskin Radscorpion, Bloatfly, Fireant and Radscorpion.” He pointed to each one in turn. “They are cheap and can be found in relative abundance.” Six nodded. “If you're not collecting it yourself, the colour is often an indicator of species alongside smell. Most sellers mix them with water to dilute the potency or quality. In general, the darker the solution the purer the contents. Understand so far?”

“Yes Vulpes.”

“There are different ways of introducing poison to a victim. Most of these.” He indicated to his choices, “are non-lethal except for prolonged high dosages. They are good for inflicting pain and hallucinations that you can use to manipulate your victim.”

“Because a dead informant is a useless one.”

“Exactly, for now, we will use these. When you're more experienced, I’ll introduce you to some of my personal blends.”

“Even the one labelled “Fake lust?” She smiled.

“A good aphrodisiac that also acts as a truth serum? I didn't know you wanted to tell me all your secrets.” he chuckled. “Now back to administering poisons.”

Six stepped out into the cooler evening air. Vulpes had continued his lesson well into the evening, masterfully keeping their less than willing test subject alive. Six drank in the fresh air cleaning all the utensils and surfaces while the anti-venom flushed out their subjects system. She wouldn't want it to effect Mark, Antony and Cleopatra.

With her task complete, Six returned to her tent gathering some rations on the way. A few strips of jerky, bread and fruit were on the menu today. Felix giving her his usual hunting request list. Perhaps Vulpes would allow her to go hunting soon?

As she drew near home she could hear chatter of two familiar voices within. It seems their day was not yet through.

“It's another blatant taunt from Lanius.” Snapped Max “We should take this to Caesar.”

“I already tried, but Lanius claimed the victory first.”

“For fucks sake.” Swore Max.

“Trouble?” Asked Six.

“Our agents in the Van Graff’s were outed. Lanius told the Van Graff’s that they were NCR officers which lead to their disappearance. The shipment bound for Caesar those men were protecting was almost taken by fiends. Miraculously, Lanius secured them. It is a legion victory but once again we are disadvantaged.”

“Shit. Who…?”

“Gaius and Julian” Vulpes replied. “More good men wasted.”

“We need to retaliate.” Max cut in coldly. “Do something rather than sit here and take it.”

“And cause a civil war? However brief it would be it would leave us weakened for the NCR dogs.”

“Then we should have a backup plan outside of the legion.” Cut in Six. “Vault 3.”
“I already told you no.” Vulpes snapped.

“It's a good plan!”

“I said no.”

“Tell… tell me again.” Sighed Max deflating into a chair and rubbing her eyes.

“Max.” Warned Vulpes.

“I just want an option other than sitting here.” Snarled Max. “Tell me.”

“Vault 3,” Six began nervously, she hadn't seen either of them this angry towards each other. She could feel her heart rate pick up. “It's functional and clear of fiends. If it looks like Lanius is going to overwhelm us or leave us with only death as a choice then we all leave together and fortify Vault 3. Until we either retaliate in guerilla warfare or take the desert outright and purge Lanius.”

“It's not viable and we are not cowards.” Vulpes replied devoid of emotion. Her friend was not here.

“No you are prideful and loyal to your own pointless deaths.”

“Six…”

“You're upset you lost two men in the field. Is then not losing the whole Frumentarii pointless also? Surely living to fight another day is worthwhile?”

“How would it work?” Queried Max.

“I make these beacons that link to my Pip-Boy. It's how I can travel quickly, I literally transport myself across the desert. I can adapt these so that they hold a small charge and one preprogrammed set of coordinates. The Vault. I can make it for crates too. So if there was an evacuation; step 1: pack important stuff quickly and send it. Step 2: press the button and poof, our men are gone.”

“Is it safe?” queried Max.

“I will have to do some testing.”

“Do it.”

“Maximus…”

“Vulpes, it's a backup. We don't have to use it. But it's something.”

Vulpes scowled and stormed away into the night. Six went to follow but Max held her back.

“He's probably going to Caesar. Give him space.”

“I shouldn't have said anything.”

“No, it needed to be heard again. Start the preparations tomorrow.” He sighed.

“I can't lose him.” Six mumbled meekly. “I will not let him waste his life.”

“Go feed your pets. I'll wait for him.” Max ordered and Six nodded.

Even if Vulpes hated her for it. He would survive.
“What brings a dishonourable fox to fortification hill so late at night.”

Vulpes stared impassively in the fading light of towards the odorous owner of the voice. Lanius was rarely discreet, his armour and mask a loud statement. It gleamed even in the low light. He must have many slaves to do all the work.

“Some of us have work to do other than just hitting things with a machete.” He replied. “I must speak to Caesar.”

“Terrible shame to lose your men like that. Good job my men could help.”

“It was rather fortunate.” Vulpes replied calmly. “But of course beneficial to the army.”

Vulpes moved to continue on, the sharp jab hit a sore spot in his pride. This conversation would get him nowhere. Veiled threats and games with his nemesis were pointless, Lanius was always ahead.

“How is that wife of yours?” asked Lanius. Vulpes stopped mid-step. “Seems like she's a good little girl bedding you like you were someone important.”

“I didn't know it mattered to you with your numerous women. I thought you would have a son by now.”

Lanius frowned, Vulpes had found his mark. “I could say the same of you.”

“Well we are young.” He emphasised.

“Yes, be a shame for your youth to be squandered. I'm sure she could be married again,” Vulpes remained passive at the vague threat. “I'm sure Caesar would see she had a suitable replacement.”

“Good job I'm in good health then.”

“Indeed it is.” He could almost hear Lanius’ smug grin. “Take care of your wife for me Vulpes. Try not to give her too many poor habits. I'd hate to have to beat it out of her.” He chuckled and walked away.

Vulpes made a mental note to give Six a second weapon to hide on her person. Something had changed if the Legate was so open in his threats to him and Six. Was it linked to the Van Graff deal going south?

Vulpes entered the tent, this was his battleground and he was a champion in his arena. He approached Caesar and bowed courteously, his master’s face was grim.

“How in the hell did this mess happen?”

For once he wasn't sure he had a concrete answer.

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Six trudged out into the desert via the secret exit. With time on her hands and access to Vulpes’ book collection she had found herself growing curious and having time to experiment. Deathclaws in particular had fascinated her. They were clever, viscous creatures. The few she had fought had
been a long and difficult battle. But a curious question grew “Can a deathclaw be trained to kill on command?”

One night when hunting she had come across a group of young deathclaws. Battling her immediate instinct to run, she managed to trap three of the juveniles and get them penned close enough to the fort that she could access them.

Mark was the eldest of the group. He had dark brown scales and the largest claws. Antony was missing part of his horn (it had been bitten off by his sister) and was sandier in his colouring. Cleopatra was the leader of the pack. She had a lot of red mixed in with her ochre coloured scales. She was a head taller than her brothers and the one Six loved best.

“Here kiddies!” Called Six. “Dinner time!”

The Deathclaws perked up at the sound of dinner Vulpes had a book on something called classical conditioning. It talked about linking sound cues to positive actions to stimulate response. The Deathclaws learned when they heard her voice say ‘dinner’ food was likely to arrive.

Initially, she began by calling ‘dinner’ as she threw meat into their cage. Eventually she said ‘dinner’ and found they responded even though she had not given them food. Now she was beginning to add in visual cues.

The recruit tried to yell through the thick gag as she chained him to a metal feeding post she had erected.

“Sorry buddy there was no way we could let you live.” She sighed. “Now don't frown at me,” she replied. “Just know your death will further science.”

With her test subject secure she checked over the rest of her set up.

“Hello Cleopatra.” She called as the female watched her carefully. “Who’s my pretty lady?”

Cleopatra growled in response. Six checked her equipment twice before locking herself in the observation cage.

“Remember asshole, don't cry and think of how you're furthering my research!”

Six clicked on her laser pointer. The small red dot buzzed to life and she aimed it at her victim.

“Dinner time!” She said and the Deathclaws roared. Pressing a button beside her the gate keeping her scaly children secure pulled back and all hell broke loose.

It was only when you were not the one being eaten by a deathclaw did you realise how brutally efficient they were as killers. Six oohed and aahed as they tore apart the recruit and ate every last scrap.

“Good Deathclaws.” She called; another vocal cue.

Six pulled the lever beside her head lowering a side of brahmin into the cage. A lure to get them back in the cage. She placed the red dot on the steer.

“Dinner time.” She called and they responded.

As the cage door slid into place behind them Six logged her findings into her weather worn journal. Another day, another success. She smiled drinking a sunset sarsaparilla in the waning light.
Cleopatra watched her intently huffing and growling behind her as Six made up conversations between them.

Let Lanius come for them. Her red dot could reach quite far, and Deathclaws had remarkable eyesight.

Cleopatra purred.

“Yeah sweetie,” she replied absentmindedly. “We’ll rule them all.”
Managed to get this written during Nanowrimo but I didn't have time to edit so now, with a bit of polish, it's ready. I hope you enjoy!

Six flew from the bed in a panic. She had left the basin nearby but the distance felt like a mile before she clutched the worn edges and threw up. This was the third time she had thrown up this week at varying times of day. Since the loss of the Van Graff deal 7 weeks ago, the Frumentarii had been extra vigilant and diligent in their activities. Despite the victories Vulpes had brought Caesar, this one failure had cost them dearly. Six could not afford to be ill. Not when he needed her.

Six heaved again, her body protesting as the last dregs of her dinner filled the bowl. A warm hand on the back of her neck startled her.

"Sick again?" Vulpes asked low as he gently rubbed her neck. "You should get medical help."

"Can’t, we’re being watched closely, homemade remedies are best for now." she replied washing out her mouth. "I’m sorry I woke you."

She genuinely was. Vulpes slept less than her. He was constantly planning and coordinating his men that he slept less. Often only sleeping when Six protested. Another failure in her part. She couldn’t afford any more.

"It is no bother, I don’t sleep well anyway." he replied.

Six stood pressing the top of her nose as nausea still washed over her. Vulpes pressed his hands on her shoulders rubbing gently. It grounded her without being restrictive. Six hurt. She didn’t want to be a burden. Vulpes kissed the nape of her neck.

"Go to the priestesses, get them to give you some herbs for the sickness." he asked quietly against her neck.

"Alright," she sighed. "If you think that is best."

"Come back to bed." he coaxed.

Neither of them slept again that night. Six lay curled against him as they talked and reassured each other with their touch.

The next morning, Six headed towards the priestesses tent. Siri handled the more obvious wounds that needed stitches. However for more complex cases the Priestesses held the knowledge passed down from shaman women from conquered tribes in terms of herbs and healing. They tried to care for Caesar and produced the other medicines they used to prevent infection. Unable to use her own medicine or sneak off to New Vegas she was left with little option than to rely on them.

"Hello?" she called into the main temple, the priestesses often remained in the rooms attached behind.
“Oh it’s just the dirty rat.” hissed a familiar voice.

“Galia.”

“Courier.” she sneered. “What do you want?”

“That’s your bedside manner? Seriously? I see why you’re a priestess now with that sharp tongue.”

“Insolent whore.”


“And both are just a cancer to the Legion. Do you have business or are you here just to annoy me?”

“I am in need of some medicine.”

“What sort?”

The woman seemed to liven up at the mention of illness. It was the first time she had seen her show any genuine interest in anything.

“I have been vomiting on and off for a week.” Six replied.

Galia paled. Her smile dropped a fraction with genuine surprise before her mask slid into place. Interesting.

“Oh dear, let’s get you healed up then.” she smiled pleasantly. It was horrifying. “Any other symptoms? Missed periods?”

Ah that was it. She was worried Six was pregnant. Which left one question. Who did she report to?

“No, no, Just dodgy rations from Lanius I think. A few other men were less than perky.”

“Then Mercia can tend to you.” she snapped. The cruel persona was back. “Keep up the good work.” she sneered.

“What do you mean?

“The world doesn’t need an Inculta brat.” she spat. “MERCIA!”

The thin waif Six remembered from her wedding stepped from behind the curtain. Her arms bore more bruises than before and she still remained downtrodden.

“Help the whore.” Galia growled before returning to the back rooms.

“This way.” Mercia gestured, her voice meek.

“Are you well? I… shit… I never checked on you after the wedding, things escalated.”

“I am well.” Mercia replied robotically. “It is not expected that you check on me.”

“The priest promoted me and I began to learn medicine, however Galia remained the same in her treatment of me. If anything she got worse. But I am surviving and learning.”

“Can I help at all? What if we took you in?”

“Only a slave can be bought. I would have to surrender my role here and go on the open market where anyone can but me. Do not be blind Courier. Tell me your ailment and get out of my life.”

“I’ve been vomiting. It’s not pregnancy.”

“It could be radiation perhaps? If you used rad-away a lot before it may be that?”

“Possibly.”

“We’ll start there.” Mercia stepped behind a curtain to a small work area with drawers and returned with a pouch. “Drink this as a tea.”

“Thank you.” Six replied.

“I don’t need it.” Mercia replied walking away without a second thought.

Six felt like shit as she walked back to the camp. The other Legionaries were bad seeds, but for Mercia to dislike her as much as she did weighed heavy on her. What could she do to help the young woman? If she spoke to the priest the bullying would persist and if she liberated her she may not recover at all. Six felt her nausea rise once again. An impossible position all with unpopular outcomes. She could not tell Vulpes.

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Vulpes listened carefully at the weekly Council meeting. They had many men already infiltrated into Hoover dam and with the President set to arrive any day now they were waiting to spring their trap. Lanius had seeded men throughout the Legion controlled parts of the Mojave and was holding the borders valiantly. However the campaign was stagnant since Vulpes’ great victories and Caesar was hungry for more.

So far they had debated another example such as Nipton, but Vulpes declined. It would water down the message they were trying to send.

“What we need is a message that the NCR are unsafe even behind their walls. I suggest we carry out an attack on Camp McCarran.” Lanius announced.

“That’s ridiculous, it would be a suicide mission for killing a few replaceable men?”

“But it’s the message we send. Isn’t that right Frumentarius?”

“On that I agree but the risk seems great.”

“Dead Sea disagrees.” replied Lanius. “He tells me in his reports that the NCR are are growing restless and focused on Helios. With the right people we could cause mass damage at little cost and kill two birds with one stone.”

“Silus.” replied Vulpes and Lanius nodded.

Vulpes mulled over the plan. If successful it would be a good victory for the Legion in continuing
the war on the NCR’s morale. But if they failed that would be more men captured and the potential for more data to be leaked. Yes he had always advised caution but such a blatant attack would not go unnoticed. Did they have enough safeguards in place for the retaliation?

“I still do not agree. Should the plan fail we then lose more men to the NCR for torture and could cause other agents to be lost.” he protested.

“Well you best hope your wife lives up to her reputation.” snapped Lanius.

“What?” replied Vulpes.

“What do you propose Lanius?” asked Caesar ignoring Vulpes.

“A three man team. Two of my best soldiers and Courier Six.” Vulpes remained silent. Lanius smirked. “The Courier is able to enter NCR buildings unnoticed and hassle free. Her reputation has not been besmirched by her marriage to Vulpes. Therefore we use her to gain access to the camp and the three of them take out a few of the key members of staff and terminate Silus.”

“By Vulpes reaction I take it you didn’t speak to him about borrowing his wife.”

“I didn’t think it necessary. He is a good Legion officer. Lending his wife to my mission shouldn’t need a second thought.”

“Well Vulpes?” asked Caesar.

Vulpes was trapped. If he consented then Six would be sent off alone with Lanius’ men and if he denied the request he would be seen as a traitor. A clever play.

“I consent for her to be part of the mission.”

“Good, Good. Just make sure she understands the rules. My men like a woman to be properly trained.”

“As long as your men understand their place.”

“I’m sure they do brat.” Lanius sneered.

“Then it’s settled. Six and these two men leave in a day’s time. Vulpes brief your wife. Till then, dismissed.”

“True to Caesar.” they both chanted.

Six was not going to be happy.

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“Oh Courier!” The shrill voice of Galia cut across the open space. Six returned to the temple entrance to meet the bitch.

“Galia, what do you want?”

“I spoke to the Priest and we decided your symptoms could be so debilitating that you should have a priestess nearby all the time.”
“That’s kind of you, but it’s not...”

“I insist.” Galia smiled. It was creepy. “Mercia has kindly offered to take the role.”

Mercia stepped from behind the curtain her shoulders freshly bruised and eyes downcast as she shuffled over to Six.

“Please take good care of her Courier.” Galia smiled. “I will be checking in on her regularly.”

*Or in other words, I’ll be checking on my spy*, Six reasoned.

“Thank you then for your kind offer.” Six smiled guiding Mercia towards the Frumentarii camp.

When out of earshot she linked elbows with Mercia and walked side by side back. Mercia was stick thin compared to her and so easily broken. Six could easily snap her like a twig.

"Mercia,"

“Yes Courier.”

“This is your one chance to be honest with me. Please note that I value honesty and if you come clean to me now I swear I will aid you however I can. But know this, if you lie to me or refuse to speak I will give you to Vulpes to interrogate and he will not be as kind as I. Do you understand?”

“Yes, yes I understand.” replied Mercia.

“Have they sent you to spy on me?”

“I am here for your health Courier.” Mercia replied. Six grabbed the slave’s wrist and twisted sharply. Not quite snapping bone but close.

“Do not lie, you are bad at it.”

“Please. They said they would kill me.” She began to sob and Six eased off some of the pressure.

“Mercia unless you give me something I definitely will be forced to kill you.” Six replied. “I do not want to as you did so well caring for me at our wedding. Be honest and I can protect you.”

Mercia bit her lip deciding. Six could tell the words were fighting to be free but the young woman fought against them. Home was getting closer. If Mercia didn’t respond soon Six would be forced to act.

“They want me to report to them what is happening in the camp.”

“OK.” Six relaxed her grip entirely. “Anything else?”

“They want me to monitor you for pregnancy and report back anytime I get hint it’s a possibility. Galia is desperate to know so she can tell Lanius. He has promised her something.”

“Alright. As best I can Mercia, I will protect you. I swear to you.” Six relaxed her grip. “Let’s get you something to eat.”

“If it pleases you.” Mercia replied meekly.

“It does, while you are with us you will be cared for. You will have regular meal-times and I’ll find you something less ragged to wear.”
“Yes Courier.”

"We’ll work on that self esteem.” Six replied as they ducked into the mess tent. “Hello Felix, this is Mercia, she may be fetching our meals.”

“Alright, she looks like she could do with a meal herself.”

“Indeed, three portions today please. Hopefully Vulpes will be back soon.”

Six took the warm bowl of stew handing Mercia her own portion before heading back towards her tent. Six pulled the cover away for the younger woman to enter and motioned for her to sit at the table, encouraging her to eat. Now to think how to explain it to Vulpes.

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Vulpes was tired and frustrated. The plan had gone downhill from there. Six would be accompanied by two of Lanius’ personal honour guard to ensure her success in eliminating the targets. The would follow her lead during the infiltration and she would do as she was told on the extraction. Six had four names on her list; all ranked members of the NCR and valuable targets and would ensure she didn’t kill their men or ruin the monorail project.

Returning back to camp he longed for the quiet evenings with Six. Getting lost in pleasure and conversation in the bedroom. Now he was fatigued and she was trapped in a mission that could easily go pear shaped. What could be worse? His wife breaking bread with a priestess.

“Good Evening,” he greeted amicably. “Tell me you didn’t kidnap her.” he pointed at Mercia.

“Who? Me? Nooo I wouldn’t do that.” Six chuckled. “Galia decided that it was best I was cared for all the time. So she sent Mercia to spy on us and report if I get pregnant.” Six placed the dinner before him, and he watched the little priestess who sat stock still. Probably hoping if she sat still he would just go away. “She volunteered the information Vulpes and I think we can use her.”

“How so?”

“Get her to feed the wrong information and get her to help around the camp treating wounds. Also feed her, she’s in this state cause of us.”

“Do you agree to that Mercia?” Vulpes asked.

“Yes Lord.”

“Then welcome to you. Follow my wife's instructions well and I will not find you on my interrogation table.”

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Six left Vulpes waiting patiently until She got Mercia settled in a tent near Max. The young woman was perplexed at the space she had and was instructed to go to Max if she needed anything
until the morning. Upon her return she found Vulpes already out of armour and sat at his table pensive.

“What’s wrong?” Six asked. His tension palpable. “Is it Mercia?”

“No, she is just a little fish in a larger problem.” He sighed. “Caesar has requested you for a mission...operated by Lanius.”

“Shit.”

“My thoughts exactly.” He sighed. “It is a reasonable plan and I had no evidence I could use to refuse him.” Vulpes held his hand out and tugged her to stand between his legs. Six sighed running her hands through his hair as he nuzzled her. “I am worried. Lanius has threatened your safety openly to me. I am concerned about leaving you with his men.”

“I’ll stay armed at all times.”

“That’s not the point.” He snapped. “I can't help you, none of us can. It’ll be you alone. I don’t like it.”

“Neither do I, but we don't have a choice.”

“True indeed.”. He sighed. “What did they say of your illness?”

“Probably radiation and being unable to treat it. That or pregnancy.”

“Could it be…” he gestured at her stomach.

“I don’t think so but after this I can always head the the New Vegas clinic for a check up.”

“Would you think me mad for hoping?” he smiled weakly.

“No. Not at all.” She smiled. “Come to bed?”

“Gladly.”

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“Vale, Inculta and Six. It seems the gods have blessed you on your day of travel.”

“Hail Caesar!” They greeted.

Six wore her recon armour and had her trusty pack slung over her shoulder. Even with her boots on she was still dwarfed by the two men accompanying her. Heracles and Titus were prime examples of Lanius’ men wearing bundled in ill fitting NCR uniform. This was going to be a long trip.

“Remember the plan.” Vulpes gave her a small note with written instructions. “Come back.”

“Yes Vulpes.” she replied. “I’ll do you proud.”

Six turned and began to make her way down the hill with her new guards not far behind. She took one last look at her lover. Proud but concerned, Six felt a pang of pain at leaving his side.
Company had become a comforting thing. As she looked away it almost looked like Lanius’ mask laughed in the sunlight.

She checked her knife again.
Phew finally a break after Nano and the yearly Christmas show at school. Thankfully now I am a bit freer I can do more. I hope you enjoy this chapter and how the plot is shaping up.

Life was decidedly flatter now that the Courier was no longer in the camp. His tent seemed emptier even with Mercia’s continued presence and he missed his wife’s council. Despite lacking Legion views she made tactical decisions that benefited the men and for him that was enough.

Mercia flitted around his tent taking care of his washing and other menial chores and on his wife’s command she was fed and beginning to look less skeletal. He often caught Maximus staring at her (although he brushed it off) and he noticed she was beginning to look less cowed. Max had even managed to converse with Mercia without her snapping at him. Perhaps his friend may finally find companionship.

Each night he received a brief report from Six. She sounded tired and frustrated. They communicated in code but it didn’t allow for much small talk. Besides he could not be seen to be a doting husband. That would make him weak.

Still it was not like he was completely without work to do. Caesar had invited him to a private lunch and it was a good opportunity for him to gauge his Lord’s mood and how much Lanius had his ear. His rival was away at the war camp preparing troops so he had greater breathing room than normal. Hopefully he could gain some ground and approval. Increasingly it felt like his position was growing weaker and weaker and the path before him was muddled. There were many threads for him to follow, but there wasn’t a larger picture forming. Either Lanius hid his tracks well or he didn’t leave any evidence left for him to find.

“Hail Caesar.” he saluted and his master and friend beckoned him to his chambers. It was rare for anyone to be given the honour but it is one he had the pleasure of having. Caesar was an intelligent man and Vulpes took great care to learn from him. He himself once held great ambition to be Caesar before he learned the true curse of the Frumentarii. But since then he swore he would be indispensable to the great leader.

“Take a seat,” Caesar offered pointing to one opposite a chessboard. “Care for a game?”
“Please, it’s been a while.”

Banter flowed easily between them. Caesar kept the discussion mainly theological as they sparred with chess but he noted the odd reference to Lanius but nothing extraordinary.

“I am pleased the Courier hasn’t changed you much.” Caesar replied. “Women have an insidious ability for worming into men’s minds.”

“If anything she is becoming more Legion. She has grown even more ruthless and efficient in carrying out my orders.”

“How is the creation of my legacy? Is she as pleasant in the bedroom as she is to look at?”

“She is very keen and eager to bear me sons. From our wedding night she begged for me to finish inside her.”

“Yet she is not pregnant.”

“Lanius and Lucius have been trying for years.” he replied snappily. A young man’s error.

“Yet there was not such a need as now. Lanius is getting restless as you know doubt know. I would not be surprised that something would happen on the mission.”

“I anticipated so as well. My wife is prepared.” he replied. “Why support the mission if you knew he intended her harm? He will continue to be bold.”

“There was no concrete evidence for me to dismiss his plan. It was reasonable and as you probably deduced that yourself. We need contingencies for him and quickly. Do you have any conclusive evidence that we could use?”

“He’s being eerily competent at covering his tracks.”

“Do what you can, my hands are tied unless I have proof and it must be substantial Vulpes.”
“I will increase my efforts my Lord.” he replied. Disappointment filled his veins and he could feel his demons gnawing on his fears.

The walk back to his camp gave him time for his worries to take hold of him. He would be calm for his men, but his already sleepless nights would no doubt grow longer. He felt trapped in a room full of doors that kept slamming in his face or refusing to open. Eventually one would reveal the answer he sought. Or he’d have to take a supersledge to it.

Returning to his tent he found Mercia in her usual spot finishing her chores. It was like having a cheap knock off. She just wasn’t Six.

“You may leave Mercia.” he ordered and the young woman looked at him confused.

“I am afraid I cannot My Lord.” she replied calmly. “Your wife gave me strict instructions not to leave your side until I have seen you eat your dinner. I quote ‘He is stubborn and hard working. He may not sleep if I am not there but at least he can eat.’ She told Max to hold you down if you refuse.”

“I think this new confidence is not healthy for you.”

“I’m sorry Sir, but she did make threats.”

“I’m sure she did.” he sighed. “Go on then get me some dinner. I will eat it.”

“Thank you.” Mercia replied and left in a hurry. What threats had Six made?

His couldn’t help the soft smile, she had anticipated he would neglect himself and planned accordingly. Mercia returned shortly with a warm bowl of stew and bread and watched him eat before clearing away. He dismissed her shortly after and signalled Six on the radio he was ready for her daily report.
Six was about done with these two meatheads. The journey to Camp McCarran had been tortuous. Her escort had done nothing but taunt her and try and make her feel inferior; either through physical intimidation or verbal abuse. They did quieten down when she ‘accidentally’ let a radscorpion get too close. She yawned as she sat away from the camp her radio in hand it was the first peace and quiet she had had in hours.

The road was lonely without a decent companion. Even before Vulpes, she had company, not always pleasant, but it was something. Six stretched with an unladylike yawn. Nights of almost negligible sleep were beginning to take their toll, but Six feared relaxing her guard at all.

Three fast clicks came through the static of her radio. Vulpes was finally able to talk.

“Hello James,” Six started. She sighed disliking that she was unable to use his name.

“Hello Six.” he replied.

Six sighed in catharsis. Just the sound of his voice. That he was still there; that home was still there.

“...report. Please report....are you still there?”

“I am. Brahmin are still healthy and have arrived at the slaughterhouse. Just waiting for the market to open.” Her bodyguards were healthy at they were at McCarran. Just waiting for the building to open.

“What time will that be?”

“I think i’ll take them in around midday. More stock to mix them in with.” We’ll go in at Midday, more bodies around for camouflage.

“Sounds like it will be a busy day.”

“Yes I’ve heard there are a lot of the big ranchers at the sale tomorrow.” There will be a lot of available targets.
“Great I hope it doesn’t get hijacked by any raiders.” I hope there will not be many interfering soldiers. He replied.

“Me too.” Six paused. There was much she wanted to say and reassurances she wanted to hear. But she had to put the mission first. “I’ll let you know what our profit is tomorrow. Hopefully we can travel quickly on our return.”

“I look forward to it. Over and out.”

Six clicked off the radio and sat still and quiet before she had to return to the constant braying of her companions. They watched her openly. They had little subtlety. Sitting in the darkening desert sun she knew she was just wasting time before she needed to give them a briefing. It was the anticipation of their prejudices that held her back. She noticed them start to talk more and knowing her time was almost up. Dusting herself off she headed back to their makeshift camp.

“Any news?” asked Heracles. “Real news mind you.” They laughed at his supposed ‘joke’.

“Nothing, the mission is able to go ahead.”

“You just look pretty and get us in. We’ll do all the hard work.” grinned Titus. “You can even thank us later.”

“I’m sure I’ll be overjoyed. Just remember I can get you in the door but if you spout that bullshit in there they will execute you on sight. We each have a person to kill. Once you’re inside kill them silently and get out quickly. We’ll meet back here and return to the camp.”

“We know the plan already.” sneered Titus. “We’ll follow our orders to the letter. You do so too.”

Six couldn’t help but read into his words. Vulpes had taught her to question everything. She knew her orders well. But what exactly were theirs?

They began their assault in the morning. Begrudgingly the legionaries had gotten into the NCR uniforms but Six had to make small adjustments to lapels and stars so that they wouldn’t be noticed. Six stepped into the lobby and smiled at the receptionist who waved them through without hassle. She nodded discreetly to the men and they separated for the task at hand.
It was odd being back in what passed for civilisation. People were civil to each other and though the men were still pigs most of the women were armed and willing to stab any wandering hands. It was...different. Compared to the Legion camp it was like an oasis of good thinking and civility. But even moreso now Six had the distinct impression that it was just a veneer to be like the old world but it was hollow and fetid underneath. But Six had to focus on the mission at hand. She had a colonel down in the basement. It was easier for her to head into the belly of the beast that the others. A loud bang erupted from the upper floors. *So much for the quiet approach.*

“For LORD CAESAR!” she heard echo down the halls.

“Fucking great.” she murmured.

“What was that noise?” heads popped out of offices.


“Third door down the next corridor.”

“Excellent work, now get inside.”

Six drew her pistol and headed towards her goal. The ruckus upstairs got louder clearly both men were being as subtle as a brick. An older man poked his head out pistol in hand.

“General!” Six called out. “You’re needed upstairs. Two Legion men have infiltrated and are killing high ranking officials. I’ve been sent to protect you.”

“Thank you Courier.” the man bumbled. He was no longer a major player in the active war game, but for the NCR to lose him so deep in their base would be a blow.

Six followed him in silently, checking the corridor behind her was empty and her silenced pistol withdrawn. She shut the door behind them and he was already sat down with a drink at his desk. *Lazy waste of space* No wonder the Legion were so strong. With a soft puff the deed was done. Brains and booze splattered across the back of the room. Clean and efficient.
Now all she had to do was leave. Six turned to leave, but two large shadows fell across the door.

Six was late.

Vulpes had become aware of the situation early on when the radio chatter at the camp doubled. There were reports of a terrorist attack and assassination but nothing specific on the attackers. He had waited by the radios all day but there was no word yet on the fate of the party. When the initial panic subsided and the first reports of the dead and wounded came in he left to report his findings to Caesar who awaited with Lanius in the main tent. The two men were sat drinking as he approached the throne. Lanius’ nonchalance irritated Vulpes but he kept his rage contained as he approached the dais.

“Initial reports are in my Lord.” he announced. “Current casualties are approximately 10 NCR wounded some of which were our targets. However it seems the attack was louder than expected. We have yet to hear from our operatives but with the furore that attack has caused I doubt it is likely we will receive communication yet.”

“Excellent, I’m pleased by this victory. Lanius, your men did you proud. Vulpes your wife proved her usefulness once more.”

“Thank you my lord.” Vulpes bowed. “I must return to the radios.”

“Inform me as soon as we know of their fate.”

Vulpes was relieved Caesar was pleased, but it was another victory for Lanius. If Six didn’t contact them soon he would be almost certain that they were caught. As he approached the radio tent Max met him halfway looking worried.

“The body count has increased but still no word on the attackers. Nothing on the Courier either.” Max handed him a clipboard of notes. “It seems two men walked into the HQ and started shooting and slashing the place up.”
“They didn’t follow the plan.” Vulpes replied.

“Nothing has been mentioned about the Courier. No news is good news right?” Max tried to reply cheerfully when he saw his friend’s grim expression. “She’s tough Vulpes. Don’t forget that. Tough and vicious as a nightstalker she is.”

“I know.” he snapped. “We will need a follow up attack to keep up the pressure. Get me the most recent reports on other NCR strongholds.”

Two days. Two days had passed since the attack on Camp McCarran and two days with little news. The base was on lockdown and with the radio not even mentioning an attack it was likely still being kept under wraps. Vulpes had almost left the second night but both Max and Mercia had stopped him and with Caesar’s approval of the follow up mission it was unlikely he’d be able to begin a search yet. Mercia brought him food but there was always more work to be done. On the third day he stopped bothering to sleep as coordinating his men took priority. Besides, if he slept he met her in his dreams that left him more haunted and weary than before he slept.

By the fifth day they began to get some answers.

“Ladies and gentlemen, I gotta say it’s been a tough few days for the NCR.” crooned Mr. New Vegas through the radio. “Earlier this week the cowardly Legion attacked Camp McCarran in disguise sneaking in amongst the civilians visiting their loved ones.” A clever lie Vulpes thought. “12 citizens lost their lives including three high ranked officials who were protecting the visitors. The savages who orchestrated the attack were stopped by the bravery of our force of nature Courier Six who received grave injuries as a result of ending the reign of terror these men brought. She is currently in critical care in a coma. Our thoughts are with our brave heroine and hope she makes a full recovery. Godspeed Courier.”

Vulpes felt like the knife was turned in his gut. She was alive, barely but the mission had been a success. Yet why would she fight the other two soldiers. Had they turned after they deviated from the plan?

“I need to go to Caesar.” he announced. “Try and contact Captain Curtis. If this has gone out then he should be able to be reached.”

Caesar and Lucius were already huddled around the radio when he arrived and judging by the tension in the room they heard the whole announcement.

“Tell me that this is a lie to cover up the truth.” snapped Caesar.
“The deaths were true, the damage was true. The deaths of the men and the Courier’s involvement are still unknown. She has not reported in. if it is to be believed she is in a coma.”

“Have you no other agents there to confirm?”

“There has been a radio lockdown since the attack. My hope is if they are broadcasting this then there is opportunity. Maximus is attempting now.”

“Then we wait. Had she shown signs of turning?”

“No, she only expressed concern at Lanius’ men and their constant harassment and threats. She didn’t anticipate problems.”

The three men contemplated and mused ideas as Lanius was nowhere to be seen. Perhaps he didn’t have a radio in his tent? Either way they were not inclined to fetch him.

“Vulpes!” Max ran in with a walkie talkie. “We’ve got Curtis.” he brought the controller to the group.

“Report.” Vulpes ordered. “And be specific you are in the presence of your Lord.”

“Yes sir.” replied the crackled voice. “The Courier and two men entered at noon, the receptionist noted she looked tired and unhappy. The men split away and the Courier went below. I don’t know what orders they had but the two men opened fire publically and declared themselves Legion. Six was reported to be looking for a general and was heard offering to protect him. There was a soft pop but they thought it was alcohol shortly after.”

“A silencer as agreed in the plan” mused Vulpes. “The others disobeyed.”

“Anyway the two gunmen went below ground for the general and met the Courier. She was attacked by both of them and fought them off but was gravely wounded. NCR soldiers finished off the gunmen and took Six to the infirmary. She has not been seen since. There was a lot of blood.” he replied.
“So the Courier didn’t betray us, but was betrayed.” mused Caesar aloud. “Such blatant disregard must have been ordered. It was no coincidence, they were from his elites.”

“Sir” added Curtis. “There is gossip going around the base from the infirmary staff.”

“How much credence can be put in it?”

“I don’t know sir. But I feel it is important for you to know. Apparently during her examination...they...they have found her...Six... to be pregnant.”

“Shit.” Lucius cursed beside him.

Vulpes felt his blood run cold. His wife was captured by the enemy, in a coma and potentially carrying his child.

This must be true fear.
Hello all. Just wanted to mention there is a warning with the chapter. It mentions pregnancy loss. It doesn't go into explicit detail however I feel people should be warned beforehand. I do not intend for it to ever get more explicit than how it is described here. In future chapters I will also put warnings for this topic.

I swear, eventually, they should have a happy ending.

Promise.

Arcade Gannon was having a rather reasonable night at the Atomic Wrangler despite recent events. Sure, his friend was in a potentially critical state and the Legion were growing far too bold but other than that the evening was going rather smoothly. That was until the man with blue eyes walked in. He walked with an officer's strut in a nicely tailored suit and ignoring all debauchery around him went to the bar to order. Arcade sighed. He doubted there would be any interest, men like Mr. Blue eyes tended to prefer women they could act all tough towards.

Arcade continued to nurse his drink as his thoughts turned dark again. It was easy to drink unnoticed in the booth in the corner and at the end of his third glass of whatever piss was served as booze he found himself wishing it would absorb him whole.

“Is this seat taken?”

Arcade jolted back to reality. It was Mr. Blue eyes. He waved vaguely to the open seat and the other man joined him. The accent seemed familiar but he couldn't quite place it through the alcohol haze.

“Drinking alone tonight?” Arcade asked. “No dame caught your attention?”

“None of the whor- they're not the one I’m looking for.” Blue eyes replied and the unsettled feeling curled in Arcade's gut.

“Do I know you?” He asked. “Maybe from the Follower camp?”

“Afraid not” the stranger smiled in return. It was chilling. “But you know my wife.” He replied.

“Hey Buddy, I’m not interested in anyone’s wife.” He chuckled mock surrendering hoping it wasn't a case of mistaken identity.

“I’m not here to hurt you.” The man laughed. “No Arcade, I just want to know, where is Courier Six?”

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Three weeks since the mission went bad and he lost contact with his wife. Three weeks of agony as he waited for news that didn’t come and no wife returning home. Lanius had been ordered to remain at the war camp until Caesar could determine his punishment. However that could not be
decided until the Courier’s condition was confirmed. He had lain awake at night imagining those last moments with her in his arms. Now he was resorting to consorting with the enemy to find any trace of truth in the news.

Arcade Gannon was not difficult to locate. Six had described all her companions in great detail and it seemed her friend was drowning his sorrows like all profligates do, in the bottom of a bottle. Now to get him alone or at least somewhere more discreet.

“Same as everyone else. She’s in a coma.” he replied beginning to cotton on that Vulpes was not an ordinary man.

“I think we both know it’s worse than that.” he drew his silenced pistol from his jacket and held it under the table. “Care to take the drink somewhere more private?” he asked charmingly.

“Do I have a choice?”

“No really.” Vulpes replied indicating his should leave the booth. He escorted them up to a room he rented and firmly locked the door behind him. “Sit please.” he indicated with the gun.

“I know who you are.” stated Arcade as if it was a great surprise. “We met at the the Lucky 38 when you were chasing the Courier. Vulpes Inculta.” He scowled.

“Well that saves half the work.” Snapped Vulpes. “then you know me by reputation.”

“And other things.”

Vulpes sighed. He didn't have time for a verbal sparring match.

“I'm not here to kill you.” He stated calmly.

“No you're here for Courier Six. What did she fail or something?”

“Why would I kill...oh you don't know.” Vulpes grinned. He understood why she didn't spread the word of their nuptials which would make it all the better.

“Don't know why she tolerated you?” Snarked Arcade.

“She's my wife.” He held up the hand that held his wedding band. To say Arcade Gannon was shocked was an understatement. He looked like his whole world had been turned upside down as he sat and stared. “Problem?”

“Yes. Lots.” Arcade replied before shutting down again. “She really married you?”

“Yes. If she were here she could tell you herself.”

“So she was involved in the attack?”

“Not in the manner you expect. The other 2 men were under different orders and she paid a heavy price.”

“But she married you? I just can't imagine… that's where she's been! That bitch! New Reno my ass!”

“Dr. Gannon back on track.” Vulpes continued snapping his fingers. “Has the NCR released anything about her condition? As her known friend I would expect they were in touch.”
“The just said she was alive. I harassed them for the first couple of weeks but then was threatened to be shot. All I know is she is stable and will be released when ready.”

Vulpes sighed. If her friends were being denied information his narrow ray of hope was beginning to dissipate. “Have you been since?”

“Bullets are bad for my health.” Arcade replied.

Vulpes was ready to snap. His body ached for a fight to vent the tension that had been suffocating him. But he wasn’t going to give up. He took a deep breath as his mentor had shown him all those years ago and brought himself back to the task at hand.

“I need you to go back tomorrow and find out what is going on.”

“No.” replied Arcade simply. “I have no proof you’re her husband willingly and I’ll be damned if I hand her back to an abuser.”

“Fine.” Vulpes replied. “A final drink before I leave?” he went and poured two drums of whiskey ensuring the Doctor’s had a little extra mixed in.

“I need something to clear my palate.” Arcade replied draining the glass. Vulpes merely watched. “I don’t feel so good. You bastard!” snarled the doctor and Vulpes stepped out of the way of the sluggish man as he collapsed in a pile.

“Alerio you are needed.” he spoke into a microphone and within a few minutes his colleague joined him.

“I take it he wasn’t cooperative?” asked his friend.

“Sadly not. We’ll have to go to plan B.” he sighed. “Help me tie him up.”

Within the hour Vulpes had left via the back exit of the Atomic wrangler in different clothes and wrapped in a heavy coat. With the Doctor’s identity stowed safely in his jacket pocket he teleported to Camp McCarran. His freshly bleached hair was still wet and he brushed it out of his eyes as he tried to mimic how the doctor walked. He was a civilian not a soldier and no doubt tried to remain discreet. There was still a military presence at the entrance as he let himself in and was patted down by security.

“Rather late for a visit doctor.” questioned a guard.

“I just finished on my last patient.” replied Vulpes. “I came to see my friend in the infirmary. Jones.” he hazarded a guess.

“Look doc, we know you’re here to see the Courier.” replied the other one who viewed him with pity. “It’s no secret that you and the Courier are close.”

“Damn, caught red-handed.” Vulpes laughed sadly. “Look, they aren’t letting me see her and I’m just worried about her. I hoped I could sneak in now and just check she’s alright with my own eyes. We been through a lot together.”

“Look man…” started one.
“Go on in buddy.” finished the other. “What it’s not like he’s a Legion spy. He’s a Follower, one of us. How would you feel if your buddy was in the infirmary and you were shut out? Just be quick about it? We can give you like an hour at most.”

“That’s all I need. I appreciate it fellas. If you ever stop by the Followers the treatment is on me.” he smiled heading into the bowels of the base.

The corridors were empty as he moved through the ghostly passageways. He noted the fresh plaster in the bullet holes and the fact there was so little activity in the main building after hours. It wasn’t difficult locating the infirmary and judging by the amount of bodies in beds there was still a lot of collateral damage. He checked over the chalkboard by the door when a nurse approached.

“Excuse me Sir, you shouldn’t be here.”

“Please.” whispered Vulpes. “My name is Arcade and I’m a friend of Courier Six, please, I’m begging you. I just need to see she’s alright.” he showed his ID. “I’m afraid for her.”

The Nurse mulled over his ID and nodded. “She’s in a bad way. It’ll be good to see her. But she still hasn’t woken up yet. It’s pointless.”

“Please.” he choked, willing tears forth. “I just need to know. Please.”

The Nurse mouthed a soft oh and wrapped an arm around him. “Sure, this way.” she consoled. “She’s lucky to have a friend like you.” The Nurse took him to an isolated room on the ward and stopped him just outside. “Please bear in mind she has suffered a terrible trauma and is recovering slowly. If she wakes up she’s going to need her friends.” she unlocked the door. “I’ll give you some privacy.” she smiled trying to be helpful before disappearing into the Nurse’s station.

Once more he was alone. The door creaked on its hinges as he entered the small entryway before the bed area. He carefully washed his hands in the small sink by the door before heading into the main room. It was clinical as he expected but it was cold as if all life and happiness had left the room and in the centre of it was the still form of Six. Vulpes moved closer his soft footsteps cut through the silence as he walked to her side.

She was so pale. He felt as if the air left him in a rush. He gently sat on the bed by her side and took her hand in his. She was so cold. He fought the emotions that were fighting to break through to keep them buried and kept down the need to hold her tight. He had never seen her so weak and so human. She was radiant and always felt like an immortal gift from the Gods. But now, this wasn’t her.

“Come back to me Six.” he whispered kissing her forehead gently. “We’re all waiting for you. Max is pining after Mercia, who is becoming a real firecracker thanks to you.” he pressed her hand to his cheek. “They need you...I need you. Come back to me. Come home.”

He sat just holding her for as long as he dared hoping his message was clear. Hoping that she heard him. When he knew time was drawing to a close he stood straightening the bed and moved to her chart at the end of the bed. He read it carefully but already heard the footsteps of the nurse returning.

“Doctor? I’m afraid your time is up.” the nurse called gently.

“Thank you.” he replied quietly. “Please can I have a copy so I can get home ready for her at the Casino?”

“Of course.” The nurse left and he followed flashing her a sad but grateful smile. “Don’t give up
Sir. She’s a strong girl and I’m sure she will pull through.” she comforted him. “Would you like me to check on you later at the Follower camp?” she smiled alluringly.

“I...thank you…” he choked out trying to hide his repulsion. “Perhaps later, I think I need some fresh air.”

“Of course, just know you aren’t alone.” she smiled as he left the infirmary, papers tucked into his shirt.

He was going to need a shower.

Arcade woke with one hell of a headache. What the hell had he drunk last night? And why was he so cold? Slowly reality came back to him and he realised who he had shared a room with the night before. As discreetly as he could he lifted his head and surveyed his surroundings. Vulpes oppressive presence was gone and in its place was a still silence.

“I know you are awake Dr. Gannon.” another male voice called out. “You are at the mercy of my master. Be good and I won’t have to gag you.”

“Can I have some water for this pig of a headache?”

The other man stood and he heard the clinking of glass before it was pressed against his lips. The other legionary looked almost identical to Vulpes, identical to the average male really. There was nothing exceptional to his presence. Probably what made them so good.

A series of quick rhythmic knocks and his captor went to the door and unlocked it allowing a strange blonde into the room...in his clothes.

“Aww Fuck you guys, I’m gonna need to burn that now.” he sighed. It was hard to disinfect Eau de Legion bullshit from any fabric. “Wait. What did you do in my clothes?”

Vulpes ignored him and whispered hushed instructions to his colleague as he began to strip. He barely caught a glimpse of Vulpes face as the other man manhandled him into a sitting position. Back in neutral clothes Vulpes looked more like himself if it wasn’t for the blond hair. Had anyone believed his ruse?

“Alerio, bind him to the headboard I need your assistance shaving my hair.”

“Blondes have it better.” Arcade chuckled. “Didn’t like the attention?”

“The nurses at Camp McCarran were very eager. Just like I’d expect from profligates.” he replied as his hair fell onto a sheet around the chair but he was dull and flat as if his heart wasn’t really in it. Soon his hair was cut close to his scalp and the waste was swept away and despite how weary he looked there was something magnetic about Vulpes. “Keep a gun on him Alerio.” Vulpes commanded before releasing Arcade’s wrists.

“Is this where you torture me?”

“No, this is where you read this document and tell me what it means.”

“You actually saw her? This is a medical file.”
“I did. Well, technically you saw her.” he replied with a smirk.

“How is she?”

Arcade noticed the dark look across Vulpes face before it was hidden behind neutrality. “She looks pale and smaller than I remember. She’s attached to all sorts of machines that keep her alive. That’s a copy of her file. I don’t understand its meaning. I would be quite pleased if you would read and explain it to me in detail and then I will be out of your way.”

“If she’s your wife clearly you should take her?” probed Arcade.

“She needs recovery somewhere safe than to return to the a camp filled with traitors.” sighed Vulpes “My hope is she will be returned to the Lucky 38 where she can recover her strength in safety.”

“How...pleasant.” Arcade replied stumbling over his words. He didn’t expect Vulpes to be so reasonable. “Hand it here.” he admitted he was keen to know her condition.

He read in silence for a few minutes decrypting another doctor’s shitty handwriting. Oh shit. He gripped the paper tightly and gnawed his lip acutely aware of Vulpes watching him with focused interest. It was bad. He was surprised she was alive at all, despite the rumours of her immortality she had come as close to death as she could and…

“Oh no.” he choked on tears. The rumour was true. If he really was her husband… “I’m so sorry.”

Vulpes held his gaze impassive and cold as he clasped his hands in front of him. Alerio was silent. The room was choked with feeling.

“Tell me Dr. Gannon.” Vulpes whispered. “I’m a cruel man, I’m sure you won’t find it difficult.” he was so quiet in his response Arcade feared for the man.

“Besides bruising to a large part of her body Courier Six was stabbed with a machete between her ribs about here.” he pointed to the spot on himself. “Even with the application of a stimpack at the scene and rapid delivery to the infirmary she lost a large amount of blood and fell unconscious.”


“Don’t...don’t thank anyone yet.” Arcade corrected. “There was an unknown complication.”

Vulpes sat frozen. Arcade was afraid to continue.

“She was pregnant.” he tried to hold back the sob that threatened to break through but it failed. “It...it...was a young...pregnancy...early stages…” Arcade cried. “The trauma was too much for her body and...and...it...it didn’t survive.”

Arcade let his tears flow freely as the sound of smashing glass filled the room. Alerio had thrown a bottle enraged and boiling over. But Vulpes sat still and quiet the only sign of turmoil in his eyes and the pain there.

“It was yours wasn’t it?” asked Arcade. Vulpes nodded.

“Alerio, see he is dressed and returned to his compound safely. I need...I need to see Caesar.” Vulpes gathered the documents from the Doctor and made to leave without giving Arcade another thought. “Get her to the ‘38 Arcade. I’ll send her a friend. She’s going to need someone warm when she wakes.”
“She is going to want you around. You should stay.”

“I will be back for her.” promised Vulpes with an expression Arcade could only describe as pure rage. “But for now, I have vengeance to take.”

“Make them suffer.” Arcade called to his retreating form.

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Vulpes punched the stonework as he exited into the cold air. His throat felt choked, his body cold and rage burned in his veins with an icy edge. He almost wished that an NCR officer would dare interrupt him so he could overwrite his anguish he felt with something else; anything else. The teleport was a momentary distraction as he arrived straight at Caesar’s tent. Despite the lateness of the hour he entered his commander’s quarters and called out.

“You have news?” Caesar appeared in the doorway wrapped loosely in a robe. “Come in.”

Vulpes pushed past the heavy curtain as Caesar chased out his pleasure slaves and grabbed the brandy from the side.

“How bad is she?” asked Caesar.

“She looks like a corpse.” he whispered. “She’s weak, still unconscious. Her wound was deep.” he wanted to explain more but it was difficult without feeling like he would break into pieces. “Lanius’s men beat her and drove a machete through her ribs. She’s lucky to be alive.”

“Or just as stubborn as she seems.” Caesar laughed weakly and Vulpes joined him. Vulpes knew he should report the rest but to say the words. To admit...his loss. He felt he would shatter.

“She...she...Shit.” he cursed downing the tumbler of alcohol. “She was indeed pregnant but...it didn’t survive. It was too early in the pregnancy.” he choked. “He caused the loss of my child. He almost took my wife. I demand punishment.” he replied coolly.

“But there is no proof other than the fact his men screwed up the plan. They could have attacked her of their own free will.” Caesar tried to reason.

“I don’t care. They were his men, his responsibility.” he snarled. “It is a crime.”

“I understand Vulpes but...”

“I’m sorry my Lord. I have served you with honour and focus for the majority of my life. Despite the humiliations you allow to occur. For once, placating me is not good enough without action.” he shouted. “Either you punish him or I will.”

“I will forgive your insolence on grief. But remember who you are talking to.” growled Caesar as Vulpes stormed from the tent.

Caesar would do well to remember who he is talking to. He thought storming back to the camp.

Sanctioned or not. Vulpes had a murder to plan.
An update after a long break! Apologies, but I needed to see where this would go rather than run in guns blazing.

I hope that you're still reading and you enjoy this.

Maximus sat around the fire waiting for Vulpes to return to camp. It was worse not knowing what the outcome could be. He cupped the warm tea in his hands as the men snored around him. There was little activity for them to do and all of them were anxious for news of their Courier. The strange woman had wormed her way into their lives and now her absence was keenly felt. Mercia sat at his side. The young woman had stayed on watch with him ever since Vulpes went on his mission and although she didn’t speak much he welcomed the company.

“She’s going to be alright.” Mercia stated next to him. “She survived a bullet in the brain. She’s going to survive this.”

“It’s not her I’m worried about.” he replied truthfully.

Vulpes had been like a man possessed since her disappearance. He didn’t sleep, didn’t truly eat as he was so wrapped up in his search for her as well as serving Caesar. He would never admit it willingly but Vulpes had grown attached to Six and his friends anguish brought him pain and fear that he could lead them to ruin for his absent lover.

It was past midnight when he heard the march of footsteps towards the camp. Mercia was dozing lightly on his shoulder, ever his quiet guardian. As he drew close to the fire he knew already that there was something very wrong. Vulpes held his shoulders high and tense, his march quick but even. He looked like a man who was walking through his own personal hell.

“Vulpes?” Max called but was ignored.

Vulpes headed straight into his tent, it was a matter of seconds before he heard the sound of something breaking.
“Mercia.” he woke the woman beside him. Angelic eyes looked up with him with panic as she heard Vulpes pained roar. “Go and get me some water and bandages. Then go to bed.”

“But Max…” he shot her a warning look. “Alright.”

The sounds of rage and things smashing rolled on for what felt like hours as Vulpes finally exploded. The men stirred and some even rejoined the firepit but none dared venture closer.

“Bad news?” asked Felix, the chef choosing to sit beside Max.

“Not sure yet but I think we can tell it’s not good.” he took the bowl and strips that Mercia gathered. “Time I found out.”

The sounds of destruction from the tent were growing few and far between. Most of the tent must have been destroyed by now. He pulled the flap back and ducked in floored by the destruction Vulpes had wrought. The bookcases and desks were practically splinters with papers torn like confetti, bottles were smashed and clothes were torn and in the centre, panting like a beast after a rampage was Vulpes. His hands were torn and bloody from the glass and wood. Without comment Max sat in front of his friend and took his hands cleaning and inspecting the wounds. Vulpes let Max as if the fight had left him and he was just a hollow man, only the sound of water filled the tent.

“She looks like a corpse Max. Like one touch could shatter her.” Vulpes spoke quietly. “She was pregnant.” he choked on the words. “It… it didn’t survive her wounds.”

Max said nothing, ignoring the soft sob that came from his friend. To almost lose Six was one thing, to lose one’s legacy was another. He couldn’t imagine the anguish his friend felt at his loss.

“What compensation has Caesar offered from Lanius?”

“Nothing equal in severity.” he growled. “I have failed haven’t I? Is this my punishment for insulting the Gods? Have we not been thorough enough? Have we not given everything to the cause?”

Max wrapped the wounds carefully the weight of despair weighing heavily on them. Yet despite
wanting to support his friend Max knew if Vulpes lost focus then they were truly lost.

“What now Vulpes?”

“I’m leaving Six in New Vegas. Get Mercia to pack her things, Six is going to need care and a friendly face.”

“What about us?”

“We’re going to find a way to murder Lanius.”

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Within the hour Vulpes was a man with a renewed purpose. Through venting his pain he had released the suffocating feeling of drowning and was able to deal once more with a clear mind. His first priority was to get Six safely with the Lucky 38 with Arcade and Mercia. Yet as he stepped from his tent, knuckles bleeding through the bandages, he realised that they needed answers. He didn't want to share, to burden his pain and shame on them. Yet they were his men and family and had adopted his lover equally. A good Legionary didn't poison his men against Caesar. A good Legionary didn't plot to murder his legate. He stepped towards the firepit trying to keep his expression neutral as more and more came around the fire.

"What's going on boss?" asked Felix as if it were a normal conversation.

"We have been betrayed." he began. "Lanius' men turned on the Courier as soon as the mission began. She is in a critical condition."

"Bastards!" one man hissed as the men murmured between themselves.

"I...she...Unknown to us...she..." he stumbled over the words the wound opening again. "She was pregnant."

"Was...?" asked Felix quietly, the rest were deadly silent.
"It didn't survive her wounds," he added as the men broke out in outrage. Vulpes held up a hand to silence them. "Six will live and until she recovers will remain in New Vegas in the Lucky 38. I cannot ask you to follow the path I must take for revenge, but know that I will not risk you all to do it."

"Fuck them!" snapped a voice. "They humiliate us and then this?"

"How much more are we gonna take for the sake of loyalty."

"What did Caesar do?" called one. "Maybe he made it alright?"

"He did not. Lanius will live."

The men broke out into muffled shouts and curses both in anger to the NCR and Lanius. It was at this moment Vulpes felt truly blessed by the unit he had built. Fiercely loyal to him and a family he was proud of.

"We're with you Vulpes." called one, and then another and another.

"I...Thank you." he replied. "Get some rest, we still have work to achieve in the desert and each of you should have you beacon from Six. Keep them near you at all times."

"Yes Sir." they replied and dispersed into the night.

Vulpes headed away from towards the tent Mercia was living within. He called out to the young woman who scrambled out of her tent still fully dressed.

"Lord Vulpes," she stuttered. "Are..."

"Pack your belongings. Anything you require for a long time. You are leaving."
Mercia had never seen such decadence and frivolity in her life. Of course there had been many towns the Legion had travelled through but they were barely clinging onto life whereas here on the strip they were celebrating. Vulpes had warned her it would seem too much and not to lose her head but to actually be here… it was like another world and one she found alluring. Vulpes stormed quickly towards the tallest hotel on the strip opposite a seedy place called Gomorrah. This was the infamous Lucky 38.

A securitron rolled over to meet Vulpes, it had a strange smiling face on the screen and spoke like a person.

"Jeeves is our access still welcome?"

"Of course! The Lady gave strict instructions that you were allowed inside."

"Good."

He strolled ahead and indicated for Mercia to follow. Stepping inside the ancient building she realised what true decadence was. "This is all hers?" she blurted.

"Yes it is." he replied. "You are going to stay here from now onwards."

"Wh-what?" she stuttered. "But the temple..."

He indicated for her to enter the lift. "It does not matter anymore."

"But Lord Vulpes..."
"Am I wrong in my assessment that you hold some form of feelings or care for my wife." he growled low.

"Yes, Courier Six has been kind to me despite our rough beginning."

"She is going to need someone who is kind." he replied. "We suffered a great loss today."

Mercia didn't know when her tears began to fall. Poor Six no wonder Vulpes looked so haggard and angry. "I'm sorry."

"Thank you." he sighed resting against the wall. "Six is going to need time to recover from her wounds. I would like for you to stay here and care for her as I cannot."

"Gladly. But what about things we need?"

"Jeeves?"

"I can get anything you need!"

"Ask Jeeves." he replied. "If you see anything suspicious let Alerio know. A Doctor Arcade Gannon will be coming with her and he will administer any medicine she needs. Even if it is against our rules."

"I understand."

They stepped out of the lift into the Presidential suite. Mercia listened carefully to his description of the facilities and was astounded by the quality of her own sleeping area. Vulpes left her to unpack as she unwrapped her meagre belongings.

"You can use anything you want here." he announced. "Use this to keep in touch with me directly. It will only contact me." he showed her how to use a pip-boy just like his own.

"Yes Vulpes."
"I need to go now, wait here and if you value your life, protect Six."

Once the doors to the lift closed Mercia understood why Six preferred living with the Frumentarii. The hotel was deathly quiet as if there was nothing living there at all. It was unsettling. Deciding to explore for herself the young woman explored her new home. The bed was too soft, she was used to the ground. The food was rich, she was used to gruel. It was so far away from reality and she couldn't understand how the Frumentarii coped with the constant changes. It was madness. Eventually she settled for some fancy lads snack cakes savouring the rare sweet treat in case Vulpes chose to take it away.

Hours passed, eventually Mercia heard the sound of the lift whirring to life. She stood from the couches and headed to the doors to meet whomever returned. The doors opened and she finally understood how bad Six actually was. The young woman was curled in Vulpes arms, her skin was pale and she was barely able to keep her eyes open. A blond middle aged man in follower's clothes followed closely behind. Six peeked out from behind heavy eyelids and waved weakly.

Mercia knew then she could do what needed to be done.

"Vulp-es." Six wheezed in whispered breaths. Each sound she made he treasured, to see her awake was a great relief. He leaned to her touch savouring the simple contact.

"Yes L-, Six."

"Tir-ed." she wheezed.

"I know, you don't need to be awake much longer," he hummed soothingly. He looked down at his wife admiring her. The super stimpack seemed to be having a great effect on her recovery but there was still a long way to go. "Arcade is gonna check you over and then you can sleep."

He smiled at her gentle frown at his soft words like a petulant child. He felt her grumble and nuzzle against his chest again eyes closed. She had been in a coma until recently being in and out of consciousness was to be expected. He laid her gently on their shared bed after Arcade pulled the covers back. With great reluctance he let her go stepping back to allow the doctor access.
"I know you're watching Mercia." he called. "Come in."

The smaller woman walked nervously into the room. She looked around eyes wide at their personal quarters. Six was not the most organised and weapons were crammed into almost every conceivable nook and cranny.

"Was she preparing for war?" asked the slave girl.

"No, she just liked to be prepared." he replied sitting on the opposite side of the bed next to Six. "She is healing," he replied seeing the younger woman stare. "She needs care, not to be stared at like she is broken. I doubt she would like it."

"Yes Vulpes," she replied.

"Don't scare the girl you brute," snapped the blond doctor.

"Did I ask your opinion on how I deal with my people?" he snarled in response forgetting how chatty the doctor could be. "If you care so much check her health too."

"I will you red bastard."

--------------------------------------------------

Minutes passed in awkward silence as Arcade checked Six wordlessly and Vulpes watched like a hawk. Mercia didn't understand what he expected of her so waited in silence. The Doctor surprised her with the way he spoke to Vulpes without fear. Did the feared leader of the Frumentarii realise how softly he looked at her? When he thought Mercia wasn't watching he would brush her hand with his own. Clearly he adored her or held her in high regard.

"She's healing well, the super stimpack sped up the process but she is not going to be back up to full speed just yet. Nutrition and her mental health that worries me."

"I agree." hummed Vulpes. "Mercia is here to ensure she eats and aid her healing alongside your guidance. Filling her with stimpacks is my limit of your medicine."
"Fine." replied the Doctor. "But only because it's her. Now you young lady, let's check you out,"

"In her room." ordered Vulpes.

"This way please." Mercia suggested leading the way. Arcade grumpily complied and as Mercia turned to leave she saw Vulpes lean over to caress Six's hair kissing her like she was a divine being. No wonder Lanius had hurt her.

Mercia thought carefully as she caught up to the doctor who waited in the guest room. She had never seen a true doctor before. Would he ask her to do depraved things?

"Sit on the bed please." he asked getting out some strange tools.

"Will it hurt?" she asked with a small voice hating how fearful and ignorant it made her sound.

"No." he smiled charmingly. "I'm going to listen to your lungs." Mercia was grateful as Dr. Gannon explained what he was going to do before he did it easing some of her worries. "Other than malnutrition and some radiation poisoning you are not doing to badly for a Legion woman."

"Us priestesses are treated better than most."

"Still, I'd like you to have a course of Radaway and to eat as much of Six's food as possible to build up your body weight."

"If Lord Vulpes allows it."

"He isn't a lord." snarked Arcade. "I'm not even convinced he's human."

"Don't tell him but I'd have to agree." she whispered.

"I'm going to go over her care plan, and then I need to get me a large drink."
"Vul-pes." her voice was tight and rough as if it hadn't been used for a while. He looked up into her eyes and she noticed how tired he looked. "Hu-rt?"

"You have been hurt badly Six." he replied gently stroking the side of her face. "You need to rest more."

"Sad?" Six questioned. He looked tired and worn out even moreso than when she left him. "Why?"

"I'll tell you later." he replied sadness clouding his eyes. "I need to leave you."

Six felt panic course through her veins. "N-o." she added "Scared."

"You're safe here at the Lucky 38. Mercia and Jeeves will be here and your friend Dr. Gannon will look after you."

"Want you."

"I know." he groaned pressing his face to her neck. "I wish I could be here too, but I have to fight them at home to keep you safe."

"Plan?"

"Yes, and your back up one." he replied. "I will not lose you again."

"Vul-pes." she whimpered as he pulled away. "Love you." she gasped out. "Need you to know. I love you."

His smile was so pure and heartbreaking in the depth of feeling he showed.
"I love you too." his lips felt soft as the pressed against her dry ones.

Six knew then how serious it was. "Feed my death...claws." she added. "My notebook, the red one, will explain rules. They leave no trace."

He smirked understanding her reasoning. "For you, anything."
"That was all the instructions said for this step."

"I'm telling you Vulpes, all she wrote was 'leave the meal in the open, get in the cage and shine the laser pointer on it.' oh and helpfully 'don't leave anything valuable hang outside the gaps.'" shouted Max. "You really need to get her to elaborate on this."

"Well, I've left the meal," Vulpes called kicking the Legionnaire in the gut. "Time to get in the cage."

"I have a bad feeling about this friend." growled Max.

The deathclaws stalked along the edge of the cage sensing fresh meat.

"Look here, she says 'call them by their names. The don't like being cursed at.' It's a deathclaw."

"Yes well, Antony and Cleopatra are Six's deathclaws and I would not want them angry." Vulpes shone the laser pointer upon the wriggling legionario. "Open the cage."

Max reluctantly opened the cage, the deafening roar of the Deathclaws made them both flinch as they charged through cage towards their meal. With a savage efficiency they tore into the unwitting victim his muffled screams short as they tore him to shreds. Both men watched fascinated at the killing machines seemingly tamed with a small laser pointer.

"Question." asked Max breaking the comfortable silence. "How do we get them back in the cage?"

"Uhhhh." Vulpes read through Six's notes but there was no clear instructions. Just something about the meat hook in the cage. "Is there a hook suspended above the cage?"

"Yes, seems it links somewhere in here."

"Do we have any meat on it?"

"Nope."

"Unfortunate."
"Aw Hell." sighed Max. "That's how you get them back inside."

"Indeed."

"Well, what now?"

"I have a promotion for you. Have you ever considered being bait?" smirked Vulpes.

Six was tired of waiting. Between Arcade and Mercia she was trapped in a constant cycle of being fed and pitying looks. She was getting stir crazy and the things left unsaid between her friends was becoming grating. After the first week of bed rest she began to exercise walking around the apartment and using the stairs until Mercia or Arcade would threaten to tie her down and she would be forced to agree. Since Vulpes had left she had been unable to get in touch with him but Mercia assured her that he was working hard for the Frumentarii.

By the end of the second week she was beginning to become frustrated. Arcade and Mercia tried their best but Six had had enough.

"At least let me contact Alerio to find out how Vulpes is!" she shouted pacing like a trapped beast. "Oh stop that look Arcade."

"I can't believe you married him."

"I did and I would do it again." she snapped.

"Look if we arrange for him to talk to you will you calm the fuck down?" asked Arcade. Six nodded and Arcade sighed muttering something to Mercia. "I need a drink."

Six continued her pacing and exercises until Mercia returned with a Pip-Boy. Six took the contraption and lay on the bed waiting for the familiar crackle of the radio.

"Mr. Fox calling the most inefficient mailman in the desert. Are you there?"

Six giggled at Vulpes moniker for her. "I am. It's good to hear you."

"I feel the same. How is your recovery?"

"It is progressing quickly. I can move around without getting tired and my strength should follow in the next few days. I just feel restless and frustrated. I wish to come home."

"Have...have they not explained why?"

"No, just that I'm still weak." The radio went silent. "Mr. Fox?"

"Sorry...just I will need a word with the others after our talk."

"Is it that bad?" She asked fearing Vulpes true wrath.

"Yes and no. There has been many developments Six and I don't know how safe I can keep you."
"We're a team remember. We took vows. It's not you alone. Please you're worrying me."

"If they had done their part you'd understand a little more," he sighed.

"You sound tired. Are you eating regularly?"

"No, I should. But Anthony and Cleopatra are well. If getting a little round. Though next time getting the children into bed should be better explained. M is still refusing to forgive me."

Six chuckled. "Poor M. Perhaps I should have made it clearer. I don't like that you are neglected when I am not."

"Can you wait one more day for me? Please?"

"For you, anything."

"Thank you, please pass the radio to Dr. Ganon for me."

_____________________________________

The next day Six waited patiently for Vulpes to make his next move. Arcade and Mercia had been rather quiet after Vulpes' radio conversation. Even Yes Man was quieter than usual. Around Noon she heard the whirring of the elevator and practically ran to greet it. After waiting for so long, there he finally was. Vulpes leaned against the railing in his well fitted suit. Although since you last saw him he looked like he aged by many years.

"Vulpes!" she shrieked and ran into his arms. She was home. "Where's your hair gone?"

"Six." he hummed holding equally close. "Let me look at you."

Six stepped back as he looked her over from top to bottom his shoulders relaxed as if in relief although his face was a battle of emotions and trying to control them. "I'm alive my love." Six cooed softly stepping close and cupping his cheeks. He dipped his head trying to hide his face under his hat but she was having none of it. Gently she lifted his head and met his gaze. His eyes ever brighter than before and filled with unspoken emotion. "I'm here Vulpes." Slowly Six leaned in and kissed him gently. "I love you." she whispered against his lips like a soft prayer and Vulpes responded holding her tightly once more.

"We have a lot to discuss and not all of it pleasant."

"Let's adjourn to my room then."

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"I'm sorry you are finding this out now." Vulpes uttered quietly. "I had expected Dr. Gannon to tell you earlier."

"Was that why you were gone because I lost..."

"No!" shouted Vulpes. "No, not because of that. It was not your fault what happened at all." he
reassured. "None of this is your fault. It is the fault of Lanius. I have been working towards getting our revenge and I needed you somewhere safe to recover. I was... I was afraid that I could not protect you in the camp and after seeing you so close to death in the ward...I could not bear losing you. My greatest love and my greatest weakness."

Six stood and crawled onto the bed. "Lie with me Vulpes." she asked softly. "I think we both need a hug."

Vulpes followed after removing his tie, shoes and suit jacket and laid on his back as Six curled against his side nuzzling against his shoulder. For the first time in months he felt complete again. It frustrated him how easily she brought comfort and how much he had grown reliant on it. But when he doubted if he had made the correct choice or not, he knew together they were stronger together and that this was fate.

"You've lost weight." Six mused aloud.

"No-one forced me to eat." he sighed eyes already growing heavy with sleep. "I'm still strong."

"And you're exhausted. I fear I should be the one holding you captive."

"With you as my jailor, I think I'd gladly let you kidnap me." he chuckled and Six sighed beside him.

"Does...after everything...do you want me like that anymore?"

"Yes with every fibre of my being," he looked down to meet her gaze. "I think and feel no less for you Six. You are mine and I...and I...By the gods this is difficult." he growled. "I love you."

Despite how awkward and vulnerable the admission made him feel when he saw Six's smile and the joy on her face and he knew the being weak for her was not wholly bad.

For a few hours he dozed relishing the feel of you in his arms again but time waited for no man and he was due to leave again. Even if his wife refused to let him go.

"Six please," he pleaded.

"Only if you promise to eat and sleep."

"Fine." He pulled an envelope from his jacket pocket. "This is the plan we have so far. I need you to get that vault ready for us in case anything goes wrong."

"Of course. I'll get on it."

"Stay safe. As long as we are alive we are winning."

He kissed her as if it would be his last before returning hollow to the elevator. The wheels were beginning to turn.

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"I still don't think you should be doing this." Whined Arcade for the 10th time since leaving the Lucky 38.

"I told you I need exercise and to vent some anger."
"But..."

"No buts." She hissed. "Let's clear this lot out."

It hadn't taken long for the raiders to infest Vault 3 all over again however there seemed to be a lot fewer than before. Her movements were instinctual as she tore through the drug addled raiders and left nothing alive in her wake. Yes Man trundled along in a securitron unit last. Eventually she reached the centre of the infestation where the boss resided.

"Didn't I kill you already?" She asked staring at the rat faced man.

"That was my Father. I am..." He shrieked before collapsing with a hole in the head.

"...just as dead." Six finished. "Alright big guy, get to work."

Yes Man interfaced with the Vault's computer while Arcade scavenged from the bodies strewn across the space.

"Yes Man, please summon two securitron to clear out and burn the bodies."

"Yes Ma'am."

"Boy you have changed." Arcade commented.

"Good or bad?"

"Just different. You're less afraid of your own shadow now. Like you have a purpose. It just irks me you found your path with him."

"Surprised me too." She replied honestly opening a bottle of Nuka Cola.

"Is he as good in bed as they say?"

"How long have you been waiting to ask?"

"A while, I hear Legion men are crap in bed. Not that I would know."

"He's kind, and in charge and generous. I've never been left dissatisfied." Six smiled. "He indulges my oral fixation and I make him feel powerful."

"As much as I hate to admit it, you look happy."

"I am. I'm just worried. If he's relying on a plan he was so against then it must be really dire." She sighed "either way, we will get the bunker ready and restocked. I hope you like cleaning."

"In this white coat? God no."

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Vulpes sat with his men eating dinner. The jovial nights felt like a distant memory as the mood of the camp was tense. Even those who were known for being jovial in all kinds of danger were quiet. He had been the cause of this state but he could not doubt his course now. Doubt would
lead to their fear and fear lead to failure. He had received word that Six had secured the vault which had set his mind at ease. Each night he thanked the gods for his men and how hard they had worked for him. They had managed to keep the plan hidden for a long time. Max took a seat beside him, Vulpes had noticed his friend becoming a little downturned and not just because he made excellent Deathclaws bait. Food was tasteless in his mouth yet he still ate not wanting to disappoint Six.

"What's eating you?" He asked Max.

"Nothing. Just not many pretty faces here anymore."

"I can get cleaned up for you Max." Joked one of the younger men in the group. Max chuckled weakly.

"Mercia is safe at least." Added Vulpes.

"I actually meant Six, but you know, I didn't want you getting jealous."

Vulpes laughed. "Sure thing buddy, we both know Six would crush you. I didn't see you wanting to court Mercia."

"I didn't till she was gone. A quiet, mousey thing that looked like skin and bones. I was just wrong. Her strength was quiet."

"Then claim her. Convince her to leave the temple."

"Perhaps, I do not think I could allow myself that weakness."

"I have learned it isn't just a weakness but a benefit."

"It would be a benefit if she was as violent as the courier." Max replied cheekily. "But I will consider it."

"VULPES!" One of the camp guards ran towards them.

"Lanius is coming with a group of men. They are armed and say they are coming to arrest you."

"Max,"

"I'll get them ready." Said his second holding his beacon. "Just give the word."

"Any sign of treachery go, even if it without me."

The men at the fire scurried away and Vulpes sent the boy away to pull the guards from the edge. If Lanius was making such a bold then perhaps they had to be prepared again. But they had been careful, the only way he could know was if he had been betrayed. Straightening his armour he walked to meet his enemy.

"Vulpes Inculta, your time has finally come." Bellowed Lanius. "Caesar has heard of your crimes and planning against him and you are to be brought before him. Submit or die."

"I submit to Caesar's law we wouldn't want you to have any fun."

"Then follow. The fate of your men depends on you."

Centurions surrounded him as his Frumentarii watched. Each one held his beacon in his closed fist
eyes defiant and uncowed towards the arrogant Legate. And in that moment, Vulpes truly saw the depth of loyalty in his men thanked Mars for their bravery. As he marched away from the camp his final thought drifted to Six and prayed for your forgiveness.

Caesar's tent was lined with the Legate's men. Lucius stood beside Caesar yet the rest of the Preatorians were absent. Despite this peculiarity Caesar seemed at ease not sensing the tension in the room.

"Thank you for coming Vulpes. Lanius has presented evidence that you were planning to murder him and overthrow my position. I decided he was being preposterous but as our law dictates I must see the evidence. Present your case Lanius."

The domineering Legate clicked his fingers and a ragged man was dragged inside. He was covered in bruises at different stages of healing and his hair was shorn away. Tossed at the ground in front of Caesar, a sinking feeling began to swell in his gut. Luke, one of his trusted agents declared missing by Lanius stared up at him.

"This worm, told me of a plan to murder me and Caesar. He was very forthcoming."

"You mean this man who has clearly been tortured, and probably admitted such under duress." He retorted. "How is this reliable proof?"

"I find myself agreeing." Added Caesar.

"He was very detailed my lord and said Vulpes had all the plans in his red book."

"Hearsay."

"Then you wouldn't mind sharing it?" Added Lanius.

"If I must to prove my innocence then I will show the book to Caesar alone as it is filled with sensitive information."

"Surely nothing you people do is that important."

"Alright Vulpes, show me the book." Asked Caesar.

Vulpes took the short walk to the dais and opened the book to Caesar's gaze. The older man knew Vulpes code as he had taught it to the Frumentarius in his youth. He skimmed the passages in silence until he reached the newer pages. Vulpes was forming a convincing lie when a messenger came with something and passed it to Lanius.

"There are plans here about killing Lanius." Said Caesar. "Started around the time we found out your men almost murdered his wife and killed his child."

"If I could not have my price in blood I applied myself to a theoretical approach as I could not go against your order." Vulpes added.

"Reasonable." Said Caesar. "I see no sign of treason here or by the word of this emaciated boy. Have you something more substantial?"

"This." Said Lanius showing Caesar the ripper.

"What does Vulpes' weapon have to do with this?" Questioned Caesar as Lanius approached.

"Everything." He sneered before slamming the machine into Ceasar's chest and turning the blade
It all happened so quickly that Vulpes couldn't react, red sprayed his armour and the many hands of Lanius's men clawed at him and pinned him. Lucius shouted and charged with his weapon but was disarmed easily. Lanius killed him with a single thrust of his spear. Crimson marred the golden armour of the former legate and the spear as Vulpes roared in anger.

"Arrest Vulpes Inculta for the murder of Caesar. Go to the Frumentarii camp and arrest or slaughter any resistance." Ordered Lanius as Vulpes looked up from the dirt at the true traitor. "Looks like I win after all. No Caesar to protect you, no wife able to love you or save you and no men to follow you. How pathetic. Lock him away. I know just what to do with him."

Vulpes tried to fight but he was overpowered. As his vision went black he saw a soldier return but he couldn't hear what was said. As he passed out his last thoughts were of home and Six and how pissed she was going to be.

"I win." Laughed Lanius.
Chapter Notes

I've been so inspired this week, not having pressure has helped my creative juices flow and I finally have a rough path to the end. Unless these two lovely idiots screw with that. Hopefully not 2nd/3rd person flipping but its a habit after writing reader insert for so long. Hopefully caught them all this time!

Thank you for your comments it really helps me know if you are enjoying it!

Trigger Warning: Lanius uses the miscarriage to insult Vulpes. Not explicit but a cruel insult.

Six and Arcade were busy cleaning the living quarters of Vault 3 when a panicked Yes Man came dashing in.

"The Frumentarii activated the beacons. They're here!"

"What? They weren't expected unless..." she paled knowing what the cause may have been. "Was Vulpes with them?"

"I couldn't see, I only came to get you." he replied.

Six tossed Arcade the mop and charged towards the surface. Her stamina was still not fully recharged and she had to take a break part way up the stairs. Eventually she reached the Vault door where she heard rhythmic knocking. Without hesitation she opened the huge pneumatic doors. As it opened she heard the shouts of men calling for calm and noticed the one voice that was missing.

"Max?" she said as the Frumentarius entered. "Why? What...? Tell me."

"Vulpes has been arrested for Treason. Lanius claims he murdered Caesar and Lucius in cold blood."

"He wouldn't!" Six screeched.

"I know that, but we had to run, they ordered us to be arrested or killed. Where can we put everything?"

"Follow Yes Man, the accommodation isn't ready but the lower levels are clear."

"Understood. Max dished out orders and the men began to drag in the crates and pre-packed boxes.

"All the beacons worked then?" Six asked hopefully. "Even our tent?"

"It brought all the main command tents in one lot. You did well."

Six smiled weakly, she would feel proud if she wasn't so afraid. If the rest of the men were safe that would mean Vulpes would be facing the brunt of the punishment alone. Lanius was a cruel
bastard at the best of times. She could only imagine what he would do once he finally had his nemesis at his mercy. If Vulpes was creative in his punishments, Lanius was brutal.

"Get your armour off and follow me. I need to know everything that you know and we need retaliate." Six commanded.

"Understood."

Vulpes awoke to pain. The Legionnaires had not been gentle in their handling of him the night before. Not that he had been particularly kind in how he treated them. Sat in a small cage in the full Mojave sun, Caesar's death was yet to truly sink in. Lanius seemed to be focused on humiliating the former Frumentariius. He was in a ragged slave clothes in a tiny cage, in the centre of camp. He had been spat on, urinated on and shit thrown at his cage but through it all he kept his calm. There was always a way out and once he found it he would be definitely seeking his revenge.

"Now you look truly fitting for your station." Mocked Lanius for his hourly visit to taunt him with food and water. If it wasn't so amateurish in his approach Vulpes would be almost entertained. "Nothing to say? Well I'll talk for us both traitor."

With a click of his fingers, a slave brought him a stool so he could sit down but not close enough to get near the stench.

"My men tell me there was a sudden appearance of a bright light near New Vegas. Seems you were twisted by that whore wife of yours. Perhaps I should have broken her earlier."

*Calm Vulpes. Keep Calm.*

"But if I did that then I wouldn't have been able to wound you so badly as the night you heard your brat died."

Vulpes ground his teeth to keep himself from snapping. He would hold the upper hand and being goaded into a fight would only mean his demise.

"How did she do it? Where did it take them? What was in the tents?" Still Vulpes refused to respond. "Alright, remain quiet then, but even in the ashes of your camp there is much to find. Still, I feel the need to be entertained." he clapped his hands and Vulpes was dragged from the cage and to the arena.

As he was marched towards the pit, Legionaries paused in their tasks to watch and curse him. Yet none dared to get closer. Tossed into the arena he was given a broken machete but his arms and legs remained chained. With a deep sigh he surveyed the scene looking for every advantage. Two recruits entered the arena, young and arrogant, they paced the arena circling him like dogs but it was everything he needed. He knew their gait, their reach, their favoured side...everything about them was an open book. He may have been weakened and dehydrated but he could still swing a blade.
"A prize to the winner. Be the first to kill the Traitor creatively and you will be promoted to my honor guard."

The two younger warriors wasted no time in charging Vulpes. He used the momentum of the first to push him to the ground and used the shortened machete to deflect the others attack. With the chains on he had very limited movements for footwork so using their momentum was his best bet. Dodging attacks he tried to guage his best opportunity.

"Just fucking die old man!" snapped the shorter one and Vulpes knew where to start.

Impatience and desperation made men weak. He focused his efforts on the younger man goading and mocking him. As he charged fueled by his arrogance Vulpes sprung his trap. As he avoided the blows of the blade he looped the chain around the front of the man's neck and pulled causing him to drop his blade immediately. As the other one circled he used the choking one as a shield buying enough time to place himself next to the whole machete. As his human shield gurgled and fell dead he snapped his neck and tossed the body at his remaining opponent. In the split second it afforded him he dived for the complete machete and took a defensive stance.

The remaining man looked to Lanius who remained impassive in his attire. Vulpes sighed and threw the broken machete like a dagger narrowly missing his opponent.

"Can we hurry up please. I have somewhere to be." Vulpes mocked.

"Glory to Mars!" roared the young man as he charged.

He made it 6 steps.

As the corpse of the other man stained the sand he knew that they would come for him. Using what strength and maneuverability remained he threw the complete blade killing a man beside Lanius as a simple blade would not penetrate the Legate's armour easily.

"Are you not entertained?" Called Vulpes mockingly.

Lanius laughed as Vulpes fought against those who restrained him again and as the whipping pole was dragged into the arena.

"Whip him, 10 lashes. Make him bleed, then salt the wound."

Vulpes struggled all the way to the post. It took four men to subdue him and bind him to the post. Vulpes snarled into the rough cloth gag in his mouth as the first blow fell. He could endure. He would endure.

Six could not believe what she was hearing. Ceasar was dead and Vulpes the murderer. She knew it was a lie, Vulpes adored his ruler and would never betray him. Yet here he was being accused of such a crime.

"He told me to look after the men. When they came back for us I ordered the escape." Max finished, his brandy untouched in his hand and Mercia sat dumbfounded.

"Fucking idiot." Six cursed biting back tears. "That fucking idiot. What are we going to do?"
"We follow the plan he gave you and try and rescue him."

"How about I get my fucking fat man and ram it down Lanius's throat." Six replied.

"Satisfying but not helpful. Vulpes is likely being held nearby and we don't want him getting toasty. Go and get the envelope."

Six rifled through the drawers of her desk and pulled out the envelope he had given her what felt like days ago. She handed it to Max and continued her angry pacing.

"Oh dear." Said Max and she rounded on him in an instant with questions. "He says don't come for him."

"That Motherfucker!" Six snapped throwing a chair. "Give it here."

Six snatched the paper and began to read.

*Dear Six,*

_If you have opened this then I have been captured. Leadership of my men falls to you and Max. He can harness your fire and you can use his experience. Priority one is getting the men settled and defenses prepared. Lanius will come for us. Two; we have been trying to find out and stop the burned man in Zion who is preventing our progress. He is an old... colleague. Find him and recruit him to our side. He hates Lanius the most and will keep our flank safe from infiltration. Three, broker a deal with the NCR to take down the Legion if Caesar is dead or incapacitated. It is not ideal but at least you will be safe. We cannot do this on our own. I will escape if I can and join you. Be a good girl._

_Yours always,*

_Vulpes.*

"That rat bastard!" Six cursed. "He wants me to go to a place called Zion?"

"Yes, it's way up north. But aren't you forgetting the whole find a way to defend ourselves?" Said Max.

"No? It's taken care of, right?" She asked Yes Man.

"Of course! There are 8 upgraded securitrons guarding the vault currently."

"Wait, what?" Said Max. "Why did they do that. You hack em?"

Mercia shifted nervously in her chair as Six realised the act was up.

"You may want to sit down for this..." She began.

Vulpes was beginning to tire yet the bloody wounds on his back didn't allow his mind to fully slip away. Still cramped in the cage he dozed in and out of consciousness until a cold hand pressed to
his neck.

"Calm Vulpes." Said a soothing voice of a slave pressing water to his lips.

"You could be killed Siri."

"No worse than being here." She replied. "One of Caesar's girls said that Lanius is sending men to Zion within the next week or so."

"Useful but I can't do much." He felt the press of cold metal in his palm.

"They are moving you tomorrow, giving you to the NCR to make your humiliation complete. The cross was too good for you apparently." Noises broke through the silent camp and Siri froze. "I have to go."

"Thank you." He said.

"Holy Shit, she did change you." He heard her hiss before disappearing into the night.

Yes, he supposed she did.

"YOU WHAT!" Roared Max throwing his own chair. "This whole fucking time you lied to us! What else are you hiding?"

"Nothing, those were just small white lies for the greater good."

"No, a small lie is saying the Mayor's wife doesn't look like a molerat's arsehole in her favourite dress. This shit is BIG."

"Men always overestimate..." Six joked.

"DON'T YOU EVEN JOKE." He snarled getting into Six's face. "My god, I should punish you for this shit."

"We'll lucky for you, you can't so I won't retaliate."

"You forget, sweetheart, that with Vulpes out of action his wife and assets fall to me. So if I feel like spanking your ass raw for this shit I can."

"Ah."

"Yes. Ah. I knew you forgot."

"Look it's just a few securitrons..."

"Approximately 850 upgraded Mk2's and 100 awaiting upgrades in the bunker at Fortification Hill." Added Yes Man.

"...which do as I tell them..."

"Via me, but I have to do everything she says it's kind of the downside of not being a No Man. Plus I don't sleep!" chirped the robot.
"...and I have at least 500 units stored under Fortification hill in a vault that I was meant to destroy but didn't."

"She took over from Mr. House and I gotta say when she dealt with the families that night with Moriarty I was pleased I was inside the computer." Six flinched again at the Robot's interference.

"For f**k's sake Yes Man you're not helping."

"So let me get this straight. You have been running around and leading the Strip and sitting on the biggest Military asset in the entire desert."

"Well technically, I can operate Helios One too." Six added looking sheepish.

"Oh Mars."

"They were just tools Max, tools I gathered for the future. Who knew when I might need a securitron army?"

"To betray us?"

"NO!" she sighed. "To protect him. To protect them. Maybe once...maybe once I dreamed that I could convince Vulpes to leave. To make an independent kingdom for ourselves. He could be Caesar and the Frumentarii would be on top. He's the most capable leader in this dead land."

"What about you?"

"I'm not a leader." Six replied. "I just don't want to die and I don't want the Frumentarii dead."

Max stormed around the room before seemingly tiring himself out. He took a deep breath and collapsed in the couch next to Mercia taking a heavy drink. "Alright, I believe you. For now. I am going to spank your ass raw the minute we get a break."

"Thank you. For the trust. Not the spanking."

"It doesn't mean I'm not angry at you but at least we have a bit more protection than we expected. I warn you though, Vulpes will be angry."

"I know, but I did it for him and I won't apologise for that nor expect his forgiveness."

"So, Zion is our focus." continued Max.

"I suppose so. There are always caravans travelling North. I can try and get on one and that'll get me there." continued Six. "I can leave in the morning."

"Then do it, we'll keep fortifying and building resources."

"Go through the hotel with a few men. There should be enough left over clothes that they can use to roam the strip instead of Legion red. Plus there are plenty of preserved goods."

"Then may Mars guide your way."
As dawn broke Vulpes was dragged from his cage and his wounds battered to check that he was awake. He expected more violence but was surprised when they manacled his hands and feet and added a chain. The Legate marched down the hill towards the Frumentarius with a sneer and he realised the truth in Siri’s words.

"Today begins your true punishment Fox," he began. "You are being given to the NCR in exchange for something far more valuable than your hide. I hear they are lining up every indignity they can imagine to wound you."

"I'll try and share your enthusiasm."

"For what it is worth Fox, you certainly were a challenge."

"Am a challenge." Vulpes corrected. "I am a challenge and when we next meet I will carve my revenge from your bones."
One thing that could be said about the Legion was that they were persistent. Since their dismissal in the morning by Lania, Vulpes and his escort had marched relentlessly through the desert towards the location of the hand-off. Judging by their pace and the position of the sun they were heading relatively northwards. Advantageous should he get away. The convoy only paused to rest over the worst hours of heat before continuing onwards. Wherever they were going they didn't believe they needed more than a day's rations which limited the area they could reach. Of course they didn't give him anything but with the Bobby pin carefully secured away he had to pick his time wisely. As the sun began to set behind a familiar dinosaur he realised their ultimate destination. Novac.

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Six checked over all the things in her bag. She had Maria, a rifle and a shotgun as well as her trusty Vault 13 canteen and plenty of preserved foods. The cave towards Zion wasn't very far from the Strip but donning her familiar armour she felt uncertainty. It would be the first time she had traveled alone since she woke up in Goodsprings and without any companions since Camp McCarran. She knew she could handle herself but last time she alone had not been enough. What if she failed now? Vulpes had left a clear line of succession with Max taking over from her and she had left the instruction with Yes Man that should she fail transfer control to Max as well. But still there was this feeling of dread. If she left the Mojave how would she ever be able to find Vulpes again?

"Alright kids, play nice while Mama's gone" She joked to Mercia and Max. "Surrender to no-one."

"Don't fuck up or get another monstrous secret." Replied Max.

"Or a second murderous husband!" Toasted Arcade.

Six couldn't help but laugh in the elevator as it took her to the ground floor. She really loved her family.

-------------

The exchange was going down at midnight. The Decanus and his squad took defensive positions and Vulpes tried to rest as best he could. His body had begun to ache and he couldn't shake the feeling of fever in his body. Was the wound beginning to turn already?

"They're coming."

Torches came from the small town and a small unit approached. They flew a white flag of peace to try and ward off signs of treachery. Two legionaries stood between Vulpes and the incoming NCR party.

"Good Evening scum." Sneered the Ranger. "Do you have the agreed price?"
"There." Pointed the Decanus.

"He's damaged."

"He's still alive and that should be enough for you profligate whores."

"As charming as you both are I'd rather get moving." Vulpes called.

One of the NCR men broke away storming towards the kneeling man. His sniper rifle and beret gave him away. Who else wore shades in the dark?

"Hello Craig." He said changing accent to that of James.

"I fucking knew it!" He snapped slamming the butt of his rifle into Vulpes face. "Hello James. Where's my friend?"

"You mean my wife? No idea." Boone went to hit the bound Frumentarius again but was stopped by his CO. Vulpes grinned in the moonlight. "But she did warm my bed something wonderful. Especially that night in Novac."

Nothing on earth could have stopped Boone from losing what little restraint that he had left. It took three men to hold him back and all the while Vulpes grinned. He couldn't help but taunt the little man.

"If you've hurt her..."

"What? You'd kill me? Seems a bit of a moot point at the minute."

"Get your shit under control Boone or leave."

"Sorry Sir," apologised the younger man. "Can't miss a single second of what we have in store for him."

"And I wouldn't want you to miss it either. Six is going to be so disappointed." replied Vulpes.

----------

Happy Trails caravans. Cheerful name for the rather down on their luck group of people. Six had found them easy enough to read and manipulate. They were so focused on her reputation that they failed to see anything deeper. A far cry from what she had grown used to. Keeping her weapon close they trekked through the winding paths from dusk till dawn, occasionally avoiding Brahmin shit and endless chasms. Yet Six couldn't shake the feeling that something was not going to end well. All she hoped was if she could get some decent loot from their corpses.

It had been four days since they left New Vegas and with another 10 days of walking ahead of her with no radio signal she was beginning to miss stimulating conversation.

Jed Masterson returned to your side. "Did I ever tell ya' 'bout the time..."

Six prayed to Vulpes' gods for strength and patience.

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For three days they had been stuck in the NCR Ranger Safe House and for three days Vulpes had been planning. He had memorised their patterns and their tells and also worn down Boone. The man slept as little as possible taking care to not let Vulpes out of his sight. It was admirable in its
own way but foolish in the long run. Vulpes had been able to sleep and they have even used a little medicine to prevent infection setting in. He reasoned it's because they wanted him alive for any show they intended to make of his arrest which was why they had been delayed. Many people wanted Vulpes Inculta dead and the NCR intended to make it a very public and exclusive affair.

"Profligates." He mumbled to no-one.

"What was that?"

Of course Boone was awake at this ungodly hour. "I said 'Profligates'"

"How original," sneered the Sniper. "I thought you were meant to have a silver tongue."

"Six never complained, but perhaps I am feeling a little uncreative at the moment." He smirked. "Besides, it's true. Your people are spending a fortune for a public trial, punishment and execution with front row seats for the best donors. True greed at its finest."

"I'd have settled for putting you down like a lame dog."

"Me too, but I still have much to do." He replied. This was almost friendly.

"Really? Was killing your leader not enough?"

"I didn't kill him." Vulpes stated.

"Really?"

"He was my Lord and closest friend. I protected him. Lanius is the traitor."

"Now that is funny. Outfoxed by that monster."

"It's not funny." He growled.

They stared at each other in the quiet dark.

"Why her?" Said Boone. "Of all people, why seduce her?"

"Sentiment our eyes met across a crowded room and I knew that was the profligate whore for me to tame."

"No bullshit Fox. You're going to die. Tell me the truth. Why take her?"

"I didn't take her." Vulpes began. "She came to me willingly. It started with a dance." He smiled fondly, "and became something more between the violence and the travelling. I don't care of you believe me but she chose me. She chose me as her husband and vowed to make us the greatest rulers of the Legion. She bore our child til Lanius...until Lanius tried to murder them both. Now, now we are vengeance reborn and we will burn whomever stands between us and the justice we are owed. And when the dust settles, our enemies will beg for our mercy and protection."

Boone sat silent processing everything he heard. Vulpes watched the small changes to his expression. It was liberating being honest for once though the other man was clearly struggling with reality he had shared.

"You're right I don't think I believe you." Boone finally replied. "I don't think I'd care if I did anyway. You took Carla from me and now you took Six and even if she hates me until the end of my days I will rid the world of you."
"I wouldn't expect anything else."

------------

On the sixth day she was beginning to get tired of the stories they told. She had made the mistake of entertaining them with one of her own and now they demanded more every break they could get. She almost wished for the molerat attacks to come. She sat alone and ate her rations finally getting some respite.

"Hey Six." It was Ricky, a compulsive liar and addict and one of the other guards in the caravan. 

"Hey Ricky."

"Look, ah, I was thinking you're a pretty lady and I'm a hot guy..."

Six burst into laughter. "I'm not fucking you Ricky."

"Awww c'mon baby I'll make it good."

"I said no, little man and unless you want to find what a shotgun feels like when you discharge it on someone's dick I suggest you walk away and don't suggest it again."

"Ok,ok, be cool lady, be cool. I get it." He said walking away in supplication. "Hey Stella..."

Six wrapped herself in her heavy recon armour and hunkered down for the night watch. 8 more days to go.

---------

By the sixth day even Boone had given up talking to him. The man's fatigue was taking a greater toll on his mental stability and Vulpes wasn't keen to find out what happened when it snapped. Earlier, he had heard the men discussing moving to the next location, but without knowing where that exactly was he was flying blind.

It was now or never.

Waiting for the soldiers to go to sleep he slipped the Bobby pin into his grasp. As he had been compliant they had taken to beating him when bored and generally ignored him. Boone was his greatest problem but the man was also weak and tired, Vulpes was sore and hungry but he was well rested. Watching the sniper carefully, he began to pick the lock. The handcuffs they chose to use were always easy to get out of. With a quiet clink it unlocked and he slipped the first one off his wrist and undid the other. Closing them once more he used them as a makeshift knuckle duster. As Boone began to stir, he bolted nimbly and tackled the other man wrapping him in a headlock and slowly squeezed.

"I will have my revenge Boone. But for my wife's sake, I will spare your life. Just sleep." Boone struggled and fought against his grip, but Vulpes was in good condition before his capture which aided his maneuver. As Boone passed out, he quickly bound and gagged the man before locking him in a side room. Taking a hunting knife from Boone's side he crept towards the sleeping soldiers.

He was the best at assassinations for a reason.

The first he found alone so he slit his throat, covering his mouth as he bled out. He claimed their pistol and moved on. One guard sat by the fire while the remaining two slept. It was almost as if
they weren't trying. The awake solder bled out like the first and with the remaining two were easily killed by the pistol.

"Pathetic."

Gathering what weapons and supplies he could he swapped into NCR armour and read the documents left. Before he left he checked on Boone one last time.

"Know that it was your profligate greed that lead you here." He said. "Please don't bother talking I can't hear you. But know that your people were willing to allow Lanius to conquer Zion in order to gain my execution." He placed the official document on the floor. "They were willing to sacrifice an entire people for me. Remember that."

Vulpes stepped from the safehouse door buried between the rocks of a mountain. Fresh air felt like a luxury after the cramped space of the cave and he took a moment to relax.

"Seems like the Legate was right. You did escape."

"And he sent Legionaries to assure my safety, how generous of him." He mocked holding his pistol tightly.

"Sadly his generosity ended with the exchange. He got what he wanted, you just need to die."

-------------

"So Jed you said Utah is filled with degenerate tribes, raiders and warlords." Six asked on the twelfth day.

"It makes Arizona under Ceasar's rule seem civilised. Oh and while we're at it. Don't mention the name Joshua Graham. It makes the New Canaanites powerful uncomfortable, and it scares the britches off the tribals. Don't mention the Burned Man either, while you're at it."

"What went wrong?"

"The Legion, that's what. Joshua Graham, he was a New Caananite, meanest of the bunch and was called the Malpais Legate. He answered only to Ceasar and was his right hand man for much of their conquest until he failed at the Hoover Dam."

"What happened to him?"

"Well Ceasar had to make an example of him and did so in a way only he could. He wanted to show them that failure even at a high level would not go unpunished. Graham was covered in pitch, set alight and tossed into the Grand Canyon. People say they didn't even scream on the way down."

"No fucking way!"

"Slaves and tribals started to believe that Graham wasn't dead and survived so much so that Ceasar forbade anyone from saying his name. Joshua Graham was erased from history but it gave birth to the Legend of the Burned Man."

"The Burned Man?" Six repeated realisation hitting her. Joshua Graham was Vulpes 'old colleague'. The Burned Man is the Malpais Legate and that was who he wanted her to negotiate with?
"But maybe it's just a story." concluded Jed.

"Maybe." mused Six. "But I hope not else I came a long way for a whole load of nothing."

-----------

Vulpes took shelter in the small cave on the path to Zion. It had been six days since is escape and five on the trail. Though the wound in his side was making any progress difficult. That night in the dark of the desert he had won, through trickery and superior gunfire, but it brought no pleasure knowing he killed his brothers needlessly. He had patched himself as best he could with the supplies he had, but the soldiers and Legionaries carried few medicinal items and he was unable to procure some for himself. Therefore during his rest at midday he ensured he washed and redressed the wound properly. He had given up preserving his back, the rough fabric of the armour he had scavenged grated upon it and even with constant washing and healing powder it was beginning to itch constantly. He only hoped there may be more help in Zion.

As the midday heat began to break he continued on foot following the worn footpath created by other caravans. He held onto hope that Six had opened his instructions and at least if he got to Zion there was a chance they could reunite. Though, with their track record, he was more likely to wander the canyon until he died. He had sent countless men on this journey before and none had returned. Joshua Graham was a formidable man and one whom he expected to eliminate him on sight. His only hope was that Six would have more success. Vulpes tried to scratch his back once more before deciding to keep moving. He had to keep moving.

__________________

It had been a massacre. The White Legs had been waiting for them, hidden on ledges above them. The others fell like flies as Six picked off those she could see. Her thick armour paid off and it prevented her from the worst. As the dust settled, what was meant to be a new adventure and opportunity had turned to ash and she was left in a foreign land. She shed no tears for her fallen companions, their passing had just allowed her to restock her supplies. What she didn't expect was the young man called Follows-Chalk.

“Hoi, White Legs don’t leave survivors that often. You’re some kind of lucky let me tell you. You came outside didn’t you? from the civilised lands? Joshua will want to know about this.”

“Joshua, as in Joshua Graham?”

“You know our leader? It’s thanks to him that the Dead Horses are strong and safe from our enemies. He’ll want to talk to you especially anyone from south ways. Come I’ll take you to him.”

“Just like that? I didn’t even need to ask nicely.”

“What do you mean?”

“Nothing Kid, you just may have been the first good new sent my way. Lead on Kiddo. Let’s meet this famous Joshua.”

———

Tired.
Vulpes kept going, one foot in front of the other. The canyon walls were beginning to get steeper so he figured he must be nearing the valley.

Is that Six? No it was a cactus.

His mind was beginning to fail. He stumbled near the cliff edge over the stream he was nearing his limit.

Tired.

Thirsty.

Itches.

He was unconscious before he hit the water.
I'm a free elf once more! Bring on Summer Break and back to these two lovelies and their fun in Zion. After some lovely comments I've thought of a scene I may incorporate later but this has become my Magnum Opus!

I'm determined to see it through!

I hope you enjoy!

Six awoke refreshed and well rested after following Follows-Chalk to the camp and meeting Joshua Graham. Looking upon his burned body Six felt a pang of pity for the man before reminding herself that this man impaled heads on spears as a warning. She felt less guilty after that. He spoke lucidly about his trials and the dangers he faced. His eyes constantly seemed to be roaming and appraising her for something but she stood tall and didn't back away. An Inculta was better than that.

After listening to him until her patience had eroded away, she got to the point. Caesar was dead and Lanius was coming and his help was needed to ensure the flank of New Vegas was protected.

"An alliance?" He mused. "Just a single outsider like you thinks you have enough to offer me?"

"I'd watch your tongue. You may be at odds with your former cohort but I will not tolerate your bullshit. I am Courier Six of the Mojave, mistress of the Lucky 38 and it's securitrons. I survived a bullet in the head and still have the three largest factions baying for my attention and brought into order single-handedly. On my own I am an asset. Now I need your help to prevent Lanius winning. Caesar wasn't perfect but I didn't bear ill will to the old man. But Lanius will raze everything in his path before his own hubris breaks him. Help me, and I'll help you keep this bunch of tribals alive."

"Impressive." He mused. "But you are not the first, nor the last to be just a title. If you are truly an asset to my people then gathering some supplies will be an easy task." He gestured for her Pipboy and she allowed him to enter in some coordinates. "Please give whatever you find to Daniel afterwards. He should be with the remainder of the Dead Horses."

"Alright, you got a deal."

Six stepped from the oppressive darkness into the cave with a new appreciation for the cool wind that blew down the canyon. She examined the nearest paths and and plotted the most efficient routes, choosing to go alone rather than with the young Follows-Chalk. As she swapped her heavier armour for something easier to move in she thought on home and hoped that the strip had not fallen apart in her absence and that Max had managed to somehow help Vulpes escape. All wishful thinking, but the likelihood was it was untrue. Taking her rifle in hand, she took the first steps on a new adventure.

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Vulpes awoke in pain and with a groan. He felt like he had been run over by a truck and his whole body ached. He had washed up on a shore and the date on his pipboy told him it had been a few hours since he had fallen in the water but even that was enough to travel a great distance.

Pulling himself from the water, he dragged himself out and onto the bank before collapsing exhausted. He barely had the energy to roll over let alone move. Was this how he was to die? In some godforsaken land from illness. Fuck that. Once more he tried to get to his feet and managed to stumble a few yards further before collapsing but at least it was in the shade. How long he stayed there he didn't know but he managed only a few more metres before he had had enough.

Closing his eyes his thoughts drifted to Six and of sleeping beside her. The world seemed intent on separating him from her and denying him his prize. In the heat haze of the canyon he could almost picture her there beside him. The sweet scent of her lotion, the soft sigh of her breath and the look of joy when she awoke beside him. Shit. He was growing delusional. Fever must have settled. He mixed the last of his healing powder in his canteen and drank it in one gulp. He needed to get the fever down rather than treat his back.

Again he willed himself to his feet and to get to some shade. Every gained centimetre was pain but by Mars he would win.

----------

Zion was beautiful. The river was literally the lifeblood of the valley and wherever it flowed life sprouted. As she searched for the Compass Six kept sipping the crystal clear waters like a fine whiskey. It was completely rad free and even tasted cleaner; if that was possible. She would have to bottle some to take home for when Vulpes returned. For he would definitely return. As she moved along the riverbank she noticed a fresh patch of blood. The geckos must have had a fresh kill. Climbing inside the school bus, she found the broken compass and with a little fiddling managed to get it in working order. All that remained was the walkie-talkies at the Fishing Lodge.

The only annoying thing about the area was the constant up and down. At least the Mojave was mostly flat compared to here. Breaks were a frequent requirement and she'd already woken up with intense leg cramps. Fuck hills. Approaching the lodge she drew her shotgun and approached cautiously. Listening closely at the door she listened for sounds of life. Slowly opening the door she spied some geckos. Normally easy, the clean water, fresh air and open spaces had made these scaly bastards more resilient.

Still, Gecko would be nice for dinner.

With comforting ease Six pushed the door open and unleashed hell upon the poor beasties. With the concentrated fire of her shotgun, Six dispatched the wildlife into a bloody mess. Stepping over the bodies she tried her best to avoid the pools of viscera to find the walkie-talkies. Still, even with though she had wasted some bullets there was enough resources that could be scavenged that it hadn't been a complete mess. On the long hike back to camp, Six began to sing along with the radio. Music was rarely something she indulged in, it was a treat when she wasn't on a life or death mission. As the familiar paintings near the Dead Horses valleys drew closer Six saw the young Follows-Chalk fidgeting at the entrance and jumpy with energy. Something had clearly happened.

"What's up kid?" Six asked.

"We caught one of the enemy!" he said excitedly. "I just found him under a cliff in the shade. Brought him to Joshua who recognised him. I was praised."

"Well if it is a red bastard I hope Joshua tears him apart. Did he get his name?"
"He was half mad from the sun and infection but he kept saying something like Vulpes."

"Of all people the river brings to me if it isn't the great Vulpes Inculta." Water poured over his face again, choking what little air he could breathe through the wet rag. "I didn't expect you to become so desperate that you needed to find me yourself."

"Still so self important? I thought the Malpais Legate would have more decorum." he mumbled hazily each word feeling heavier than the last. "Caesar is dead."

"I've heard, but still his men come in search of the famed Zion." He chuckled. "The girl this morning told me the same, your information isn't going to save you snake. I haven't forgotten who held the torch at the execution."

"Orders were orders, it was nothing personal." Vulpes huffed at his captor.

"I never was one for small talk." hissed the bandaged man pulling Vulpes to his knees. "Anything to add before I kill you and throw your corpse away?"

"Yes." said a feminine voice. "Holster your weapon or I'll murder everyone in the valley."

"Courier? You're back early and defending...him?"

Vulpes lifted his head but his eyes were unfocused the fever must be making him delirious. Six could not be here.

"Of course I'm defending him." she replied. A dark shadow fell between him and his captor. Was she real? "He's my husband."

"So the great Courier is nothing but a common Legion wh-"

The sound of a gunshot and a cry of pain filled the cave.

"Call me a whore again and the next time I'll shoot something more important than your thigh. We are independent to the Legion now, but yes. He's mine."

"What if I refuse and kill you both?"

"Then the Fat Man Mini-Nuke's I have in my rucksack outside will detonate and kill everything in a small radius and irradiate the area for a decade. Look...I'm going to heal him, and then you and I are going to talk. The resources I found have been distributed, I've kept my end of the bargain, now you keep yours."

Vulpes groaned and hissed in pain as thin arms lifted him to his feet and braced his arm across his shoulders. Once more he tried to focus on his saviour but it was too difficult. He slipped unconscious again.

"Go and get Waking Cloud!" Six shouted dragging the unconscious Vulpes towards the healers tent. He was a mess. He had lost a lot of weight and was burning to the touch. He was far from the strong man she had seen before. Was that how she had appeared to him after the NCR incident? Six dropped him on the straw mattress and her bag beside him. Graham followed close
behind her and watched closely.

"Why did you become his slave?"

"I'm not his slave I'm his wife."

"Same difference with the Legion."

"We made it work. We were more than the roles given to us. We are going to rid the word of Lanius and make the Mojave safe again. Together."

"Honourable."

"I need to treat him. Either you help or you leave."

"What do you want me to do?"

"Get purified water...shit, I suppose all your water is pure. Get the bandages from my bag and the gauze too."

Carefully Six cut away the fabric of his clothing. He was unnaturally pale and clammy to the touch. The infection was running rampant. Afraid, Six called for her antibiotics and stimpacks and revealed the damage done. A sob broke through her calm demeanor at the mess they had made of his back. The wound was weeping and smelt putrid. He must have been through hell. The first step was to clean the wound and purge the pus and other areas. Six began by dosing her lover with Med-X. He didn't need to feel any of this. Slipping on a pair of clean leather gloves she began to press and clean the wounds with the clean water and a little bit of antiseptic. Some had healed over but we're red and inflamed others were deep and open. Waking Cloud changed the water three times and by the time his back was cleaned and Six had administered multiple stimpacks the flesh began to knit itself together, but it would scar horribly. Tears ran silently down her face as she rebuilt her husband with what little resources she had.

With the gauze in place, Six rolled Vulpes onto a clean shirt to protect him from the dirt on the ground. His front was less wounded but still he was marked up. Six measured a large dose antibiotics and injected it in his arm.

"Now all we can do is wait. I need to clean the wounds regularly and replace the bandages daily and maybe, just maybe the fever breaks..."

"Unlikely." Said Graham.

"Suck a dick." Six growled. "I'm going to pop back to New Vegas. Waking Cloud please can you keep an eye on Vulpes?"

"Yes."

"I found you Vulpes." Six said quietly in his ear. "We found each other, don't you dare fucking die on me now."

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He was by a river, the waters of life ebbed and flowed within like a heartbeat. He stood on a pier staring at the tranquil waters. He felt a tug compelling him to enter the water but he felt like he was forgetting something important.
"I found you Vulpes."

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Six lay awake watching Vulpes in the soft light of the fire. She had kept a diligent watch over her charge after returning from the Lucky 38 casino with enough medical supplies for a hospital. Anything she didn't need she shared with Waking Cloud's people and earned her some respect with the locals. Even when fatigue began to claw at her senses she would stay by his side curling against him, hoping and praying for some small sign he was winning. She understood now how he felt seeing her broken and prayed to any deity listening that it would not happen again.

Vulpes had been unconscious for 7 days. But still Six kept her vigil.

"Am...am I dead?" a raspy voice croaked. "You can't be here."

"Vulpes?" Six stirred from where she lay meeting the half open gaze of her lover. "No you're not dead idiot."

"Feels like it."

"Well an untreated infection can do that." she replied with a smile, holding back tears. "Don't worry you had the best doctor in all of Zion."

"Tired." he grumbled. "Come here."

Vulpes shakily raised his arm making space for Six to move closer. Eagerly she rolled and rested her head against his chest as the soft sound of his heartbeat brought comfort.

"Let's stick together from now on." Six said softly.

"Amor vincit omnia."

Love conquered all.
Reunions and Rituals

Chapter Notes

NSFW ahead. I missed these two being together!
Thank you for all your comments they keep me motivated and I'm glad people are still reading this!
Also if anyone wants to ask me anything or say hi my tumblr is liala-lavellan.tumblr.com!

Vulpes awoke a little dehydrated but from a wonderful dream. A soft sigh against his chest drew his attention and he found that for once it wasn't. Six slept beside him, her hand fisted tightly in his shirt as if he was her lifeline. He sent a silent prayer to the gods thanking them for allowing him more time to exact his revenge. If his cause wasn't true then he would have perished. He caressed her bare shoulder and noted the numerous track marks in his arm. It seemed it had taken a ton of old world medicine to save him once more. But if it enabled him to continue his revenge then he assumed the gods had forgiven him. He had been so close to the eternal reward he could still taste the fresh air. Six shivered beside him and slowly began to come back to her senses. Were her eyelashes so long? Her eyes so bright? Her smile so...perfect.

"I should drug you more often it makes you look relaxed." She mumbled sleepily.

"Did you really threaten to murder a whole tribe and fight the burned man? I think I dreamed that..."

"Yes that happened, and the town is still rigged to blow in case he has any ideas. I found his other refuge and rigged that too. I dislike the idea, the Sorrows are good people but Joshua's men are more savage. I'm trying to convince the Sorrows to leave with Daniel."

"How healed am I?"

"Physically you're fighting fit, but it may take your brain a little time to catch up with it."

"Miracle worker." He replied kissing her forehead. "Mine."

"I'll go get us some breakfast, then we need to share stories."

He nodded and sat up stretching his back satisfied by the clicking of his stiff bones. After a thorough stretch he was beginning to feel more lively and the pain had gone. Miracle indeed. Six returned quickly carrying two bowls and was followed by a bald, no, shaven-headed woman with a Yao Guai claw. The new arrival eyed him warily and sat beside his wife sharing in their meal.

"Vulpes, meet Waking Cloud. She speaks the most common language of the tribals and is their intermediary. Daniel, a new Canaanite is their leader but in honesty, Waking Cloud knows what is best for her people."

"Six is a good warrior and helped us. As her husband I share my thanks to you for sending her. I have learned a lot more about healing."

"You're welcome." he replied.
"I am the Midwife to the Sorrows, Daniel taught me much after he saved my third child when The river almost took me and my child to the Father. Still, I talk of family but we must talk about war."

Six explained what had happened since her arrival and the steps she had taken to help the Sorrows and arm the Dead Horses. Waking Cloud offered greater context and Vulpes quickly gained a grasp of the political landscape.

"The question Waking Cloud and I have debated is; do we evacuate Zion as intended but risk it being taken by another or do they abandon their peaceful ways to defend their home?"

"What do your people feel?" Asked Vulpes.

"We are scared, and have lost many already. My husband was lost crossing to our new promised land but I fear danger will follow and we will be forced to run again and again. I do not like war, such as the Father in the Mountain taught us. But I dislike the idea of being frightened cattle less. This is our home."

Vulpes nodded. To lose home would also mean to lose identity and their culture. Legion understood that best, erasing each tribes identity till only the Legion remained. He knew that all too well himself.

"The others will listen to me." Continued Waking Cloud. "I will listen to her."

"Waking Cloud your people need to decide if your home worth fighting for. Are you willing to die to protect it? War and conquest brings change both good and bad but it brings new strengths and opportunities."

"You are right Vulpes. We will discuss it." She turned to Six. "Will you still go through the ritual?"

"I will friend."

"See the Shaman when you are ready. I pray to the Father your spirit is strong."

The woman left and he was left wondering what the hell had Six agreed to do now.

"I know that look Vulpes, don't worry it's only mildly dangerous."

"Mildly? I am regretting sending you here at all." he chuckled.

"Spoilsport."

"This is a mess we shouldn't dabble in."

"It's a bit late for that to be honest." Six replied. "Now spill the beans. What the hell happened?"

Vulpes told the whole tale, from accusation to escape. It was cathartic and Six listened so well. Her frown was comical at Boone's behaviour and by the end he hadn't realised how weary he was.

"I can't believe it." Six sighed. "What do we do Vulpes?"

"If it were me, I'd get the Sorrows to fight. Pacifism serves its purpose but being able to defend your home is vital." He said taking her hand. "Just as we will do anything to protect ours."

Six nodded. "I need to get ready for the ritual."
"What does it involve?" asked Vulpes.

Six noted how he tried to contain himself despite how it pained him to be left behind.

"I drink some sacred datura root, commune with the spirits, kill a spirit Yao Guai and take it's claw for a glove."

"This is why I hate tribal rituals." He growled. "Sacred datura is still a poison. You're willingly poisoning yourself and heading into that mess of a canyon."

"If you take the mystery away then yeah, that's what I'm doing."

"No. Absolutely not."

"Too late Vulpes, we need the power to interact with the Sorrows. This is how to achieve it." she replied dismissing his fears.

"Then I'll do it too."

"No way, you just come back from the dead."

"I'm not letting you do this alone."

"Why do you have to be so stubborn."

"Why do YOU have to be so stubborn?" He retorted with a smile. "Come here, I've missed you."

Six knew that look. That hunger. She crawled over to him, straddled his hips and wrapped her arms loosely around his neck. He smiled, making her stomach dance with butterflies, it was the same one that lured her to his charm. His hands cupped her ass and pulled her closer against him as he leaned forward burying his face in her chest and breathing deeply before pressing a featherlight kiss against her heated skin. Six ran her fingers through his short, rough hair holding him close but not trapping him against her. Ever so slowly he teased his kisses higher and nuzzled against her neck as he sucked rough marks onto the soft skin.

"I have missed you love." He growled as she rocked her hips against his aching length. "Do you...can we?"

"Yes Vulpes, I need you too." Six purred lifting his chin, her heated gaze meeting his uncertain one. His eyes said so much as Six closed the distance and kissed him with the pent up longing in her soul.

Each kiss was her attempt to convey her hurt at losing him, her joy of reunion and how much she needed him. Vulpes responded with equal eagerness as desperation and hunger mellowed to a slow and savouring pace. Six tore off her shirt and stood to remove her trousers. Vulpes merely pushed his ragged underwear down to free his aching length. Six stifled her moan against his lips as he guided her to rest upon his cock and rock up and down his aching length coating him in her juice.

"Such a Good Wife eager for her husband." He purred as his fingers pressed within. "You are wet enough, can I?"

"Please Vulpes, I need you now."

Six raised her hips and his pressed the engorged head of his cock against her slit as she slowly sunk
down engulfing him in heat. He hissed as Six took a moment it had been weeks for both of them.

"I Courier Six... do... offer myself to you Vulpes as your equal. I swear to share and everything I own. I give you this kiss and touch as a gift of our love. I offer my body and pledge myself only to you. I give you my hand as a symbol of that promise, that I will be tied to you and that my body is yours. I beg you to hold it, until you wish to let me go. I will be your Venus and I will give us children." Six whispered lovingly in the altered vows they had taken so long ago as she moved slowly savouring his touch and making love.

"I Vulpes Inculta, do take you Courier Six as my wife. I will protect you and provide for you as you would do for me. I accept your gifts and share my own equally to further our family. I will seek and value your counsel and share my own on matters both personal and for the future.” He took her hand and held it tight kissing her softly. “I take your hand as a symbol of our union and of our vow until the day we walk into Elysium together.” he said voice with determination. "I love you."

"I love you too."

Soft sighs and ardent promises filled the tent as they reached their peak together and in the light of the fire stayed joined in the afterglow.

Freshly washed and armoured up, Six showed Vulpes what weapons she had scavenged allowing him to choose what he wanted.

"You can't help but steal or take anything not nailed down."

"It could be useful." She smiled.

Vulpes wished he could coax her back to bed again, but doubted she would let him distract her even if he wanted to. The barriers of uncertainty and fear that had caused a chasm to form between them seemed to have been healed. They would recover from the wounds dealt to them even stronger than before. Fully equipped, they sought out the Shaman hidden in one of the higher caves. Reluctantly he drunk the bitter liquid and watched as Six drank hers. Within minutes the world began to tilt and shift in colour. Having not had experience of hallucinogenic drugs Vulpes found the experience disconcerting. Six lead the way her fire shone the brightest as the hunted a beast called She. All around them it was as if the whole canyon had a heartbeat and throbbed. Six shone the brightest and before they left the valley she pulled him aside and practically mounted him.

"Do you fell like your body is on fire?" She gasped. "Fuck I feel like fire and you're water."

"Mmmmfhm. Later love, I can't shoot a Yao Guai if I'm distracted." He growled.

"Promise?"

"I promise, if you're a good girl until we get back I'll fuck you as much as you want."

"Let's get going then!" She giggled pulling him along.

The whole experience was one he wouldn't want to experience again. A vast blend of colour and morphing shapes and teeth. So many fucking teeth. By the time the burning corpse of She fell before Six he felt the weariness of the trial take it's toll. Six carved as Vulpes watched their backs and soon enough they were back in the cave.
"Congratulations! We will have a celebration for our two newest members. Rest up, the Datura drains us all."

Six dragged Vulpes back to a different sleeping area and dumped their gear in a small lean to that faced away from the centre of camp. Without waiting Six began to strip off her armour and lay only dressed in her shirt. Clearly the Datura had a strong effect in her.

"You're glowing." she stated. "And when we touch the colours blend."

"You're high as a kite." He stated.

"I'm horny." Six replied moving onto all fours. "I want my husband to fuck me."

"So impatient too. You know just how to rile me up."

"Please Vulpes."

He slapped her ass before pulling her cheeks apart. A few light touches and she was drenching his hand. He had missed feeling this wanted.

"Courier Six I have heard the good news!" Waking Cloud appeared around the side of the tent.

He couldn't help but laugh at Six's growl of frustration.

"Really! I was just getting to the good bit!" Growled Six.

"Come now, it will be more fun later. My husband...I once teased him so much he went into a rage and that's how the second of my children was blessed to us."

"Teasing him Vulpes is not always a wise choice." Six smiled.

"Still it is only one time you become our Sister. I want to make it perfect and spend time with you. The men can entertain themselves. It is their luck to have us and we have not had much to celebrate of late."

"Alright, you win."

Vulpes sighed heavily as he watched the festivities pensively. Six had been gone for hours and when the Shaman brought him his ceremonial clothes he had warned that the women were heard laughing in the Midwife's tent which usually meant that there was trouble afoot.

The gear was simple. Trousers and a waistcloth that bored the blue and feathers of the Sorrows. It stirred distant, forgotten memories of a boy who died in Legion fire. Of a life he did not have. He watched mournfully allowing himself a moment to ruminate on what might have been. The Legion brought order and stability under Caesar and allowed him to rise to a power and place he wouldn't have had in his old tribe. But it had come at great cost. He was a monster and capable of great atrocities yet he would not change his choices. He had a place he belonged. The only problem was that it had been taken away. If his tribe had fought and not conceded to the might of the Legion, would they have been slaughtered? Either way, in surrendering their existence was lost to the winds of the desert. A fate that could soon follow the Sorrows.

The music changed and became softer and more sensual. A flute and stringed instrument played a
sweet tune as the sea of men parted and the tribal women arrived with Six at Waking Cloud's side. She was dressed in a similar manner. A short wrapped skirt with a tube of fabric covering her breasts. Unlike the midwife she didn't wear a feather collar but beads and patterns drawn in paint covered her body and emphasised her form and hid the scar from her injury. His trousers were suddenly very tight.

The women began to dance and Six awkwardly followed rolling and rocking her hips seductively keeping his gaze. Her loose hair waved in the wind and she looked just like the wild and untamed force of nature he saw her as. Each movement and twirl burned the fire of his lust higher and judging by her smirk she knew what she was doing. When she finally drew close enough she dropped into his lap looking so pleased with herself and vibrant.

"Enjoying yourself?" He said low trying to hide the desire in his voice.

"Very much so. Once the ceremony is over about we sneak away and continue where we left off?" Her smile faltered. "I mean if you want to, I know last time was dark and you couldn't see the scar..."

He kissed her softly. "I cannot wait. Do not doubt the strength of my desire. Your scars do not diminish you." He comforted.

"Good." She smiled.

"Six, Vulpes." The Shaman called. "We welcome you under the watch of The Father in the Mountain.". The tribe cheered and whooped. "Wear the arms of She as a sign of belonging. That's all there is to it. We don't get many outsiders join us so I don't have anything else to say. Let us forget the danger at our door and live."

The village celebrated and Vulpes rolled his eyes at all this melodrama for a quick welcome. But as Six tugged at his hand and pulled him away from the crowd he found himself caring less. At least the tribal gear was easy to remove.

The river was not far away and since Six had tasted the clear water she had wanted to share it with Vulpes. He had been drinking the water for days but Six found herself drawn to it. As she drew closer to the water she piled up her clothes and swam out into the deeper water. It was cold but the stone still held some warmth from the sun. The soft sound of splashing told her that Vulpes had followed. His warmth wrapped around hers and she turned in his embrace.

"I take it you like the water." He said against her ear.

"It's pure, Vulpes. There's no taint in it. Haven't you ever wanted to bathe without worrying about Rads?" Six kissed the droplets of water from the skin of his shoulder nipping and sucking the skin. "You taste so good. I wonder if it tastes better anywhere else?"

"I'm not having you drown because you're feeling excitable." he growled.

Vulpes pulled Six towards him and pulled her legs around his waist. She hummed at the thick press of his cock against her slit which she quickly took advantage of stroking and teasing his hardening length. With practiced strength he lifted her and carried her to a rocky outcrop. He lifted her and placed her on the makeshift altar kissing the soft flesh of her stomach.

"Let's see if the water truly is sweeter." he smirked before roughly pressing his tongue against her folds.
Six cried out his name to the moonlit sky grabbing at his scalp for something to ground herself with. With sure strokes he teased her entrance with his tongue and focused on her clit before pressing his finger within focusing his attention on her clit and a spot that made her writhe beneath him.

"I do believe it does taste better," he purred.

Six sat closer to the edge of the rock spreading her thighs open and Vulpes took the hint. With a soft moan, Vulpes entered her slowly pulling her physically closer so she could wrap her legs around his hips to pull him closer as he entered in one thrust. Six kissed and marked his skin as he began to thrust earnestly. It felt so good to be filled again as she reached between them and rubbed her clit. She wanted him hard and fast.

"You feel so good Six," he praised. "Look at how your perfect tits bounce or you tiny fingers rubbing your sweet little clit. Fuck...If I could spend my entire day within you, I think I could."

"When we win. Definitely. Gonna keep you in my room for days." Six replied mid kiss.

"Oh yes..." he growled.

"I'm close Vulpes." Six whined.

"Good Girl," he soothed. "I want you to come as hard as you can." he said sucking her breasts roughly as he sped up his thrusts.

"Oh god! Oh Vulpes!" Six moaned. "I'm coming!"

Vulpes continued to tease and continued through her pleasure as she begged him to finish within her. Vulpes muffled his own release against her neck as he thrust deep and kept them joined as he softened. As the water grew too cold they retreated to her tent and continued to relish the quiet moment of intimacy before the maelstrom of the impending war with Lanius hit. Returning to the warm confines of her tent Vulpes held true to his promise of spending the night in each others embrace. But aware of the crowd nearby Six bit on the flesh of her palm to keep herself quiet.

"Oh that won't do my love. We'll keep going till they hear you." he chuckled.

What a sly fox he was.

Vulpes couldn't sleep easily. After losing so many days to unconsciousness, he wanted to remain away as long as possible. He sat beside Six looking outwards from the tent and watched at the world changed in quiet stillness. The other revelers had also begun to fall asleep. He had survived the worst and now he had an optimistic future. But first there was much to plan once he could get in contact with Max once more. At least all his men survived.

He stood and headed towards the fire to warm for a few minutes. The lone figure of Waking Cloud was the only one who remained.

"Good evening Vulpes." he nodded in response. "I have thought much on your words but have yet to find a clear path."

"Leadership is never easy," he replied with a sigh. "I am not used to sharing, unlike my wife who is the kindest and luckiest soul in the desert. I will share with you some wisdom that Six would
likely disapprove of...I...would fight. My people were like yours, free and living in peace. The Legion came to them and they caved to submission. Not a trace of their existence remains today even my memory of the rituals and names of the tribe are gone and I do not know if any others remain. I have achieved much in this life but at what cost? I could have been a different man if we had fought back. If you run you will never be able to reclaim the life you have now. There will never be a place as clean, your places of worship will never be quite right and in likelihood you will be wiped out through famine and disease."

"So what would you suggest? We fight? We become like others?"

"I would suggest that if this place is important enough to you, you would fight to remain rather than be blown to the winds. Fighting back once does not make you warlike but running away will mean you will live in fear forever." He stood hearing Six call for him in concern. "If the choice was mine, I would remain. Goodnight Waking Cloud."

He returned and calmed Six, holding her close.

"Where did you go?" she mumbled against his chest.

"Told a leaf from your book and tried to help. I don't care much for it." he replied and she laughed softly.

"Still it's progress." she added kissing his chest. "I'm proud of you."

"Cheeky." he teased kissing her forehead.

"Always, now back to your important duty of cuddling me."

"Of course, my naughty brat." he growled. "Then battle tomorrow."
Six awoke the next day with a headache and a mighty need for some decent food. Vulpes stirred from behind her pulling her close to his chest.

"Do we really have to get up?" He chuckled pressing a kiss against her neck.

"Yes, but cheer up, we'll be killing some of Lanius' allies today. That's got to be exciting. Plus Joshua will be joining us. You can challenge each other to be the manliest."

"You wound me. I thought I was the most fearsome." He replied placing warm kisses against her neck. "I feel like I could eat a brahmin."

"Probably munchies after the drugs." She mused. "Come on, let's prepare for war."

Breakfast was small and dense in energy. Brahmin jerky and sweet porridge was filling without leaving a sickly feeling. Movement was going to be important later on. Six had finished getting into her clean clothes as Vulpes was tying a bracer onto his forearm. Picking up his armour Six held it up piece by piece as she helped him to dress just like before in his uniform. She kissed the skin under each piece of armour and made sure it was secure. She was not leaving it to him alone. In turn Vulpes tied her armour, similarly worshipping her body. He would not let her safety be left to chance. When they headed to the centre of the camp Waking Cloud and a few of the other Tribals were talking around the fire.

"Six, Vulpes, please, join us!" Called the Midwife.

"Good morning." Six said with a smile as they perched on the same log.

"We have come to a decision about our future. We want to fight for our home. We do not want to leave."

"I think that is a good choice." Six replied. "The Father would be proud. He said to protect yourselves with righteous fury."
"You learned his teachings?"

"I found a few of his messages in my journey, yes. Tell them, the day will be hard. There will be losses and we will mourn those we love. But in defending your home you will be stronger but do not let it make you cruel." Waking Cloud relayed her words and those around the fire nodded. "What did they say?"

"That you made more sense than Daniel. That you understood us."

Six smiled and nodded to the tribe. "Any children or those who cannot fight should hide in the mountain."

"It will be done."

"It seems Courier in a short time you hold much sway with the Sorrows." said The Burned Man with a hint of disdain.

"Listening and Learning works." she replied with a hint of sarcasm, though Vulpes remained quiet. "What brings you to the camp this morning?"

"We are moving on the White Legs camp today."

"Alright," Six replied. "Do you have a strategy?"

"We'll move together through the Valley and take them out one by one."

"And?" she said expecting more.

"We'll take their main base and kill their leader and the Valley will be safe."

"That's it," she said. "Throw bodies at them? Blind violence?"

"It works. Unlike your husband I know how to plan an assault."

"Yes well unlike you Vulpes at least conquered two major towns with minimal loss. What is with the Legion's hierarchy. When did the lives of men become so cheap? I wonder how you conquered so much land with the amount of resources you consume."

"I didn't ask for your opinion Courier. You have chosen my path and now we go to battle. Get them ready."

Six bit her lip resisting the urge to continue the argument but knew Joshua was resolute. "I'll sort us out. You just make sure the Dead Horses are ready."

Vulpes watched the back and forth between the former Malpais Legate and his wife. Six was right to be skeptical about his strategy. It would be a slaughter on both sides if they just threw bodies at them and how many of the Sorrows actually knew how to fire a gun? Strategy was going to be important in the canyon.

"Waking Cloud how many of your people can shoot?" he asked.

"6 of us can do it well, the rest mainly use claws or manual weapons."
"Six, how many weapons have you hoarded?"

"Plenty Vulpes, enough at least so those who can shoot can be armed. I may have some other weapons too."

"Excellent. I suggest we arm you with our gear. Graham will have given his best equipment to his people and is unlikely to share with us. Six maintains our weapons well and it will be better than nothing at all."

"Same for armour, anything I can spare, I will."

"Does anyone know of any other paths through the Valley?" Vulpes directed his question to Waking Cloud who relayed it on.

"There are no paths we use daily but there is an ancient path once used by the Father in the Mountain and is sacred."

"But it looks down upon the Valley?"

"Yes,"

"We need to take that route." Vulpes began. "It will give us the advantage and allow us to avoid being fish in a barrel."

"I do not understand."

"If we follow Graham, we will all approach here." began Six explaining with his rudimentary map. "There will no doubt be White Legs along these ridges meaning it will be easier for them to shoot us. If we take the sacred road, then we are above them and they will be weaker."

"It is not a choice we offer lightly, but less will be lost this way." he continued, relishing how good it felt to be in control once more.

"No one returns from these places. The Father keeps them."

"They will return." began Six. "I will go ahead and clear the path and pray to the Father to allow us to pass. He would not want his children harmed."

"Is there time?" Vulpes asked. Graham was keeping a tight schedule.

"I'll have to meet you there and leave now."

Vulpes frowned in thought, identifying all the possible benefits and costs. It was a skill that had prevented unnecessary risk and waste of resources but the Courier was not just a resource. Still, by having a back road the loss to the Sorrows would be minimised and they could get closer easier. He didn't particularly care for Graham's men, but then what if they were betrayed as before? Could he risk losing her again? She was the lynchpin in securing enough power to take back the Legion...

"Vulpes." The soft brush of her fingertips against his neck broke his spiraling thoughts. "I'll be alright. Trust me."

"I do." He replied. "Go, we will meet you there."

"But the Father in the Mountain..." Waking Cloud interjected.
"Would he wish your people to die needlessly? Would he not be forgiving? It's not as if we're going to go into every sacred place nor do we expect you to."

"I...I see your point. But we will need to pray before...and seek that forgiveness."

"We leave soon" he replied noting the familiar routines in the Malpais' camp and the setting sun. "Make sure everything is distributed too. It's going to be a long night."

Six headed towards the cavern her pip-boy light blazing green across the arid surface and dead plants. There was beauty in this valley but when night fell the beauty quickly twisted into shadows that hid danger and played tricks on the mind. Yes, the light made her a target but she could accept that for the sense of safety it gave her. As she drew closer to the valley, she extinguished the light and allowed her eyes to settle before heading towards the forbidden path. Most likely, it lead to a cave which would contain the diary of a pre-war refugee and in her experience, the traps were inside rather than on the path, but it paid to be certain.

By moonlight and the low light the pip-boy generally produced she was able to navigate and spot the thin shadows of any trip wires. It wouldn't be a perfect sweep but as darkness fell quickly in the canyon she had little choice. Keeping low, Six crawled to the edge of the cliff and could see below the torches of the White Legs and the scale of resistance expected. Creating a small mental map in her head, she followed the path ahead noting that it did indeed split towards a cave but a second smaller path, no bigger than a ledge, curved downwards towards the entrance of the main compound. No doubt that would have a guard or two. If only she'd packed her rocket launcher or her favoured grenade launcher. The one time she didn't want the extra weight of the weapons it turns out she needed them. Fucking Murphy's Law. Heading down as much as she dared, she only hoped that in the chaos of Graham's attack it would not be as carefully manned or someone had a great throwing arm.

Reconnaissance completed, Six retreated towards the entrance of the path and waited in the brush formulating strategy. Vulpes probably wouldn't be pleased if she went with her gut feeling which usually led to near misses and lots of luck. No, she'd have to save that sort of plan for her next solo trip. Within the hour she heard the soft sound of footfall and made herself known in advance. Friendly fire from jumpy natives was also a possibility.

"Vale Courier. Did you fare well?"

Six raised an eyebrow at his use of her title, but she supposed thinking of her as Six or his wife in a battle against the odds like this would be too compromising and Vulpes was nothing but business.

"Yes, the path is clear. Let me demonstrate."

In the low light she sketched a quick map in the dirt and relayed what she had learned. Vulpes probably wouldn't be pleased if she went with her gut feeling which usually led to near misses and lots of luck. No, she'd have to save that sort of plan for her next solo trip. Within the hour she heard the soft sound of footfall and made herself known in advance. Friendly fire from jumpy natives was also a possibility.

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"Yes, the path is clear. Let me demonstrate."

In the low light she sketched a quick map in the dirt and relayed what she had learned. Vulpes nodded along and then began to give orders with practiced ease. It was a skill she lacked, disliking ordering anyone to do anything. With the plan distributed they took up first positions waiting for Graham's first strike.

Sure enough, the first shot erupted through the Valley and the silent night erupted into battle cries and agony. Vulpes signalled for them to press forward. Six took point knowing the terrain already as Vulpes left the gunners on the ridge and watching their backs. Graham's men moved decisively but in the dark it wasn't clear what the number of casualties for either side was. As soon as they were in position Waking Cloud whistled low and the side attack began taking out the hidden
men and speeding up the others approach. Seeing an opportunity Six began her descent down the small path, her grenade ready to throw. It was this moment she was most vulnerable, but with adrenaline in her veins she was ready for anything.

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Trusting Waking Cloud to guard them as well as she had watched over Six...no the Courier...his focus was on the small frame making her way slowly down the cliffside. He winced as she slid down the last part of the incline perfectly in control but he did not like risk. Not in battle. He sighed as she reached the bottom and signaled the all clear.

When had he become so soft? He and Six had battled side by side numerous times over the course of their journey; why was it now he struggled? They had both almost died, been betrayed and we're now relying on a man even his people had thought of as a monster to be honourable and to be trustworthy. Things were just easier when it was him and Six. But then after this...no, he could dwell on that later.

He began sending the melee warriors down before following at the rear. The tunnel at the base was narrow and easily defensible by a small team, if the front door wasn't being torn down by intruders. During his time with the Malpais Legate in his Legion days he had always been aware that the man's drive and determination were the most fearsome things about him. He would not relent no matter how big the task ahead. Apparently that trait couldn't be easily removed by his so called faith.

"The guards are taken care of. There's a split ahead and Graham's just broken through." Reported Six.

He nodded, she was an effective second in command.

"Let's meet them then."

---

"Of course there had to be a trap!" Snarled Six as the debris settled.

"I can see the inner sanctum ahead Courier, I will go ahead."

"No you wait for us you son of a...!" But Graham was gone. "We've got to..." Six snarled heading towards the other cave.

"Courier. Calm your temper. We go together."

Six didn't look back, couldn't look back. Her anger was what was keeping her upright and moving as the adrenaline began to ease. Leading the foray she shot without thought or care for cover; her infamous luck keeping her alive until strong arms dragged her against the wall.

"Calm Courier. No foolish deaths remember." Said Vulpes with a tone of command as he restrained her. "Ready?"

Six nodded feeling foolish but determined. Vulpes led this time and the others seemed to keep their distance as they pushed to the final cave. By the time they arrived the White Legs were already being executed needlessly and even after their surrender. Salt-Upon-Wounds was on his knees at Graham's feet as the Burned Man seemed to consider his options.
"Stop this Joshua." Commanded Six, he would not cow her. "You have won, there is no honor in killing those who are on their knees."

"Yet they must be taught a lesson for their insolence."

"We have killed the majority of his tribe. His people are broken and are cast out. Their tribe is dead."

"Still, they require punishment."

"Spoken like a true Legate." Six snapped coldly. She was glad Vulpes allowed her to lead, her rage had not abated. "You think because you claim you are a holy man this justifies your actions. This is just Legion tactics with a new label. A true holy man would let them go and leave them to their fate. A true holy man would forgive for was that not the word of the Lord."

Graham watched Six through unseeing eyes as he processed her argument. She knew he wanted to change. He was on the cusp of something brilliant but...violence called to him.

"You...you are right." He sighed heavily. "What would you do?"

"Banish them to the flats, your God will decide if they live or die. Should they return, execute them."

"But you are condemning us to death." Whimpered Salt-Upon-Wound

"Or am I giving you a chance to live? Should I allow the executions to continue?"

"No...no we accept your judgement."

"Good, now fuck off." She snapped. "Waking Cloud escort their people to the cave and tell the Dead horses to lead them out of the canyon."

The sound of footsteps faded and were replaced by silence between the three leaders. Six turned to face Graham aware of the damage he could still cause. Vulpes watched from the shadows gun ready but not stepping forward.

"You two truly are a force, for good or bad I don't know." Sighed the Burned Man. "We will guard the valley for all who remain. Vulpes, you commanded the battle well, as a Legate I would think it cowardly but considering the losses of my men perhaps a cautionary approach isn't so bad after all."

Vulpes nodded from the shadows.

"Courier, a gift. I think it has guided me this far but you may need it. It's named 'A light shining in darkness'."

"Thank you," Six smiled. "Now, how about a drink?"

By the time they emerged from the tent they had been sharing the sun was high in the sky. Upon their return from the battlefield the Sorrows had shared a quiet prayer and drink after the harrowing experience. Six had insisted they keep the weapons and armour she had shared as a gift and once again Vulpes questioned how viable her kindness really was. But seeing them all alive and safe once more he decided he wouldn't complain too much.
In the bright light he admired Six's form as she retrieved them some water and food. He was disappointed when she lost her cool and rampaged in the cave, the angry bruises on her ribs a reminder of her mortality. However the smaller bruises he had placed on her made him smile. They had teased and joined slowly affirming they had survived again and relished in touch. It was better than he had hoped after...after everything. He had hoped one day when she was ready she would seek him out again but hadn't expected it to be a while. He had seen other slaves lose children and retreat unless forced. He was pleased she had come to him and found comfort in his touch. Perhaps...perhaps they may be blessed again once the war was done. But for now he was pleased to have his warrior queen at his side.

"You look pleased with yourself." She smiled.

"I am. We prevented Lanius gaining ground with only a few tribals and an irate mailman."

"Mmm, I hope we haven't ruined them."

"We gave them a choice Six. They chose to fight, the consequences are not ours to bear. We kept them alive."

Six nodded as she began to clean herself. "We should leave tonight."

"I agree, but can't you just zap us back with that infernal machine?"

"I could if we were the other side of the canyon. I can pick up transmitters I have placed here but not the other side. So we jump to the tunnel, a two week trek and then jump back to Vault 3. No doubt your men will be eager to see you and we can check on the repairs. I left Max, Mercia and Arcade in the hotel, but we don't know if the NCR are going to be waiting on the strip."

"Alright, I'll arrange for food and water supplies."

"I'm going to bottle as much water as I can. I will miss the clean water." Six smiled sadly.

"Perhaps one more swim?" He offered as she smiled widely. "Maybe near that secluded waterfall and we can clean thoroughly." He said low.

"My incorrigible fox."

In the two weeks that passed Six came to realise how much she missed the quiet life of the Sorrows and Waking Cloud's quiet presence. Vulpes was quiet but as they grew closer to the Mojave, tension began to return as they anticipated the changes that would await them.

"I found their god you know." mentioned Six during the journey.

"Found him?"

"He was a pre-war man. He took shelter in the caves after the war and survived. I'm not sure if he became a ghoul or not, but the holy places were his bolt holes. When the Sorrows first arrived he left them books and taught them how to survive. They were just children and gave him a reason to live. The Sorrows disappeared because he lay traps to protect himself but they would be killed. He left a warning so they would stop needlessly dying. They called him The Father because he cared for them."

"How did you find all this?"
"I broke into his bases and read his journals. It wasn't hard. He seemed so sad and lonely. In the end, he died on a mount overlooking the valley. I found him and buried him."

"A man who became god."

"A man who tried to be kind and do what is best. I didn't tell the Sorrows, but I found his last entry by his corpse. He just wanted them to be safe and happy."

"Perhaps he was worthy of their admiration after all."

Between short bouts of conversation the journey was quiet. Six knew there was still much to talk about but she wasn't ready to reveal all. Six feared how Vulpes would take the news of her schemes. Rationally she knew he would understand her planning and foresight but would he view it as a betrayal? All she had done, she had done for him, for them. Of course Max was melodramatic, but...

Doubt still lingered in her mind as they finally broke into daylight. The familiar flats of the Mojave bringing a sense of home. They had made it and were home.

"Ready for the mess of questions?" She asked with a smile.

"As much as I can be. It will be good to see them...even if I am not worthy of their support anymore."

"Your men love you Vulpes. They never believed Lanius." She reassured. "They will be pleased you have returned."

He nodded not wishing to continue the subject.

"Oh, just one last thing." She added hastily. "If Max has some wild stories of shit I've been up to, ignore him and don't be mad, okay?"

Vulpes frowned.

"I have totally been a good girl."

He raised an eyebrow in question.

"Just trust me, he's a little dramatic about a plan I put in motion a while ago."

As he went to question her she pressed the button dropping them at the vault door much to the guard's surprise. The guards swamped him as the door opened and he was carried along by his grateful comrades. His frown however indicated she wasn't off the hook just yet.

All she had to do was keep moving and hope they didn't catch her.

Easy.
Vulpes had been perplexed by Six's strange statements but had pushed his curiosity back upon his
arrival at the vault. He hadn't expected such a welcome upon his return. In his eyes he had failed
them but his men treated him like a lost family member. Even Max who was the most expressive
of his men seemed even more jubilant; in the beginning.

"Have you spoken to Six yet?" Asked his Second as they toured the vault. It was an impressive
base.

"Yes, but judging by her reaction and yours there's more to hear."

Max perked up and scanned the heads no doubt for the Courier. Just what had she been up to
while gone.

"Mario, has anyone left the vault since we returned?"

"Just the Courier, she has returned to the city."

"I'm going to skin her ass raw."

Vulpes raised his eyebrow in curiosity but Max declined to comment immediately.

"Let's go the other way, we can catch her from behind."

Curiosity won over fatigue as Max lead them to a tunnel recovered from the ruin. It seemed to lead
far into the distance compared to the other vault tunnels.

"We discovered this old escape route from the city to the vault. It must have belonged to House as
it drops us into the Lucky 38."

"Useful, but doesn't answer why you are going to punish my wife."

"Well, you were dead at the time and she really deserved it."

"She was that bad?"

"The opposite, she behaved in a manner similar to us. I never knew she could be ruthless. Still
now you're here she is once more your responsibility. I think she aged me. See I have greys."

Vulpes chuckled as they approached a round room with a lift. It was similar in manufacture to the
other parts of House's base. A useful pass indeed.

Six reclined in the chair in front of Yes Man's screen not bothering to change from her dirty
clothes. It wasn't as if Vulpes or Max could reach her up here.
"Hey boss it's great to see you...I mean not because you're back to give me something to do finally..."

"I missed you too Yes Man. How are our campers?"

"Most are upgraded now and are ready for deployment."

"Awesome, what about our neighbours anything you can tell me?"

"The NCR have doubled their presence here and not just with drunks. It seems they feel threatened by something but it can't be us..."

"Flattery will get you nowhere buddy. I'm still pissed you sold me out."

"Well you said you liked specifics."

"You know you bitch you have to do as your told but really you push your luck a lot."

"Well, soooooooryyyyy boss. I'll remember that."

Six screamed mentally. God he was frustrating. "What about Lanius. We're we able to get surveillance?"

"Yessiree! I even fed your deathclaws. Am I a good mastermind?"

"Yes, you're a good boy." She chuckled. "Back to Lanius."

"He consolidated his power mainly through his undermining of Vulpes and their escape. He's been pushing the troops hard and trying to take new ground but thankfully what wildlife isn't eating then the town's people are thanks to the NCR actually doing their job."

"Well, if the army is mobilising it won't be too long until they go for the dam."

"I would guess but it's not like I'm a supercomputer!"

"God you're so whiny! What is it you want?"

"Some new chips and attention would help."

"Oh my god you're like Rex, except he's actually a dog."

"Well at least I don't drool."

Six couldn't help but laugh.

Vulpes recognised the control room where the lift had deposited them. Six had never bothered to lock it up again after they killed House. Max indicated for him to be quiet as they approached the other room and familiar laughter cut through the silence.

"Well if you're a good AI I'll revisit some vaults and see if I can get you more memory."

"See now, this is why I like you boss."

"Sure, sure." She sighed. "Send a message to the families. I want to see them at Marjorie's place for drinks two nights from now. I'll bring the booze. While you're at it, dig through the database and find schematics for..."
Vulpes froze. Jeeves was more than a butler which meant Six had lied and was using the program to form her own plans. He caught the eye of Max who nodded solemnly.

"Also get some more protection out to Novac, Goodsprings and our smaller settlements if Lanius is pushing I want the people safe."

"You betcha."

"Is there anywhere near the dam we can store units ready for the battle?"

"Not underground."

Vulpes quietly stepped from behind the wall. Six clearly didn't expect anyone to catch her here with how she sat and was completely unguarded.

"Start drawing places we could start sending units. I'll see what Vulpes knows."

"Yes Ma'am."

"What is it you'll hope I know?" Vulpes asked from behind her.

Her shrill shriek of surprise was satisfying as she fell from her chair and scooted to her feet.

"How did you get in?"

"The lift that links the vault to the 38."

"You didn't think this important to tell me?" She snapped at the screen.

"You didn't want details."

"Oh fuck you!" She snarled. "No memory chips for you!"

"Six." He said his voice more like the tone he uses on a recruit. "You have some explaining to do."

He watched as she tried to weigh her options for escape but seeing Max blocking the lift to the suites it was unlikely she was going to get away that easy.

"I suppose I do. Can we go to our room?"

"No. There are plenty of seats here." He indicated towards the sitting room.

Six led the way at least having the decency to look contrite. Max remained in his guard anger fixated on the machine and the irritating smirk it bore. Six sank into the couch as he poured himself a drink. She had tried to tell him it wasn't what he thought it was but his experience told him such acts meant betrayal even from his wife.

"Please know Vulpes everything I have done, I did it for us."

"For us?" He snapped. "You would have told me."

"I couldn't, not while Caesar was alive and you were strictly Legion. You'd have destroyed them out of obligation."

"When did this...plan...begin?"
"When I decided I would pursue you romantically, which meant getting rid of house."

"I had found Yes Man after I killed Benny, he explained how they were going to get rid of House and make an independent Mojave. I transferred his mind into the system after House was dead. I wanted an insurance plan for if something went wrong between us or things went well and I needed to protect us."

"When you were taken by Moriarty, my actions cemented the loyalty of the houses as a side benefit and I've been keeping them in check you knew that. Then there was the bunker. I finally found out why I was shot. As you know, House was building more securitrons with upgraded weapons and the platinum chip was the key again you knew this. So I did damage needed to appear like it was destroyed and had Yes Man repair the system so they were usable and upgraded. With how the Frumentarii were treated who knew when we might need help."

Vulpes was at a loss for words. A rare and unusual sight. "So you gained a robotic army and never told me?" He was annoyed at the hurt in his voice.

"There was no need. If things had continued as they were I wouldn't have needed any of it. I would have formally delivered the strip to you as a gift and left the securitrons deactivated. It was security. I told you on our wedding day, I would do anything to protect us...Sad thing was a part of me wished I could convince you to start our own kingdom free from the Legion, from anyone."

"I would never..."

"I know that!" She snapped tears forming in her eyes. "I know that...but as Lanius kept ruining our plans I had to make sure we would love, all of you especially after..." She sniffed. "I will not lose you too."

"That's not the only thing though is it Courier." Called Max.

Six sighed heavily. "I also have control of Helio One which is basically a space laser. It shouldn't be used by any side, but the only way to be sure was to rewrite the code and make it accessible only by me. But that was before we met and again, it was a guarantee."

Who was this woman before him? He thought he knew Six. She was doting and homicidal but she hid nothing from him willingly. Yet his assessment had been all wrong. She was a bigger threat than she made out to be and one who had fooled him into submission and ease. Rationally, he respected her foresight and resourcefulness but it was still betrayal.

Six watched Vulpes war with himself. He was clearly hurt, which wasn't her intention, and was torn on how to react. But judging by the white knuckles of his fists and dark glint in his eyes it wasn't good. Precautions had to be taken.

"Yes Man deny access to any security system by anyone other than me. If I am incapacitated control goes to Arcade for the immediate future. Should he be hurt you are free to do whatever you want." She spoke quickly and clearly issuing the order. It would prevent control being taken by force yet it also confirmed her guilt. "I'm sorry..."

"YOU'RE SORRY?" he exploded. "I trusted you, thought you were a true ally and I hear from your own lips that you betrayed and lied to my face? But you're sorry."

Six didn't want to cry, couldn't. It was a weakness, but her heart ached and she needed comfort. She needed to get away.
"I did it for us!" She said getting to her feet.

"You did it for you!" He snarled marching her pose. "You did this to protect you!"

Six couldn't believe her ears, did he really believe she would so readily betray him? Were they that fragile?

"I'm leaving." She said moving towards the elevator. "If you truly think that badly of me then leave. Yes Man will seal the lift behind you but if you care even a little then stay. Yes I was afraid to tell you because you loved Caesar and your life in the Legion. There was nothing that I could say where I would win. But that was fine because I had you. You and the Frumentarii. It was the first time I felt safe since I crawled out of the grave. The first time I felt at home."

"If you care so much, why leave?" he snapped.

"Because we're both hurt and have already hurt each other enough. I'm going for a walk and some air. Maybe we can broach this again once the sting has left."

Six turned away despite wanting to seek his warmth and headed for lift. Max huffed and stepped out of the way.

"Don't forget your bag." Huffed the large man.

"I have what I need." She said waving A light shining in darkness. "The rest is in my room."

The journey to the suites was cold. What little happiness she had regained was lost and she was left alone again. Stepping towards her room Arcade met her and saw her upset and followed without comment.

"I'm guessing Vulpes found out." He said quietly closing and locking the door behind them.

Six nodded angry at the tears that clung to her face. Weakness.

"He sees me as selfish and a betrayer." She said small. "It hurts."

Warm arms tugged her into an embrace as the torrent of sadness overwhelmed her and she bawled like a child allowing her sorrow to consume her. Arcade held her and comforted her but it wasn't the right scent or arms that she wanted.

"What do you need bar a strong drink?"

"My bag with a few days food, Maria, a rifle grenades and a bottle of booze. I think I should learn how to drink."

"Where are you going?"

"Out." She said non-comittally. "I need space, so does he. He can remain and we may reconcile or he will leave in which case the path to he vault will seal and that's it. Oh and, I've locked them out of Yes Man and accessing the securitrons. If I die power goes to you, and if you are harmed Yes Man is unleashed without supervision."

"Good to know." He said packing a few extra medical supplies. "All done. Booze in the bag or...?"

"Pass it here." She said "I'll walk and drink. I mean only Lanius, the NCR and Craig Boone are trying to kill me. So it should be a quiet night."
"Don't even joke Six. I couldn't bear the thought."

"Yes, you could." She replied with a sad smile. "I'm just a mailman given too much power who has disrupted your lives with this grand adventure. There's nothing special about me and if I weren't here..."

"I'd be drinking that bar dry." Smirked Arcade.

"Course." Six grabbed some paper and scribbled a quick note to Vulpes. She wasn't sure if they were a few last words in case she didn't return or a final appeal. "Can you give this to him?"

"I will. But you'll be home soon...right?"

Shouldering her bag she kissed him on the cheek and unlocked the door, booze in hand.

"Maybe."

"Come on, we should go." Said Max heading for the lift.

Vulpes felt numb. He had survived in order to be reunited with her only to find her duplicity. It wasn't meant to be this way, they were going to raise an army and...

Raise an army. She had done that for them and even put them to work scouting locations and protecting the people. Of course she had lied but...

It was wrong! All wrong they were meant to do it together! Not with robots or space lasers! It wasn't honourable, it wasn't fair, it wasn't...it wasn't Legion. It wasn't the Legion way and he didn't like that enough to push away the benefits. Six was right as his anger abated he didn't want there to be more arguing.

"I'm not leaving." He said firmly. "I will wait for her return and try again."

"But..."

"We are alone Max. We are not Legion and neither is she. She gave us an army, she gave us shelter her way and we refuse it because it isn't our way. True she lied but..." He sighed. "I'm tired and I want my own bed. Accusations and arguments can continue tomorrow but we are not throwing away the one person who wanted us."

"As you wish. I'll stay as well."

The pair travelled the elevator down and to Vulpes relief Six had already left her usual gear missing from their place. Instead he found Arcade tidying some ammunition away.

"Doctor Gannon." He said quietly making the man jump. "Why are you in my room?"

"Your room? It's hers. This whole fucking tower is." He snapped. "I helped her pack, she just left."

"Alone."

"Yes, unless you count a bottle of the King's Moonshine a person."

"Did she say..."
"Nope. She explained what had happened and I packed her bag and she left. She left a note for you."

"Why is your coat wet?"

"Why do you think asshat? She was distraught.*"

"So you held her?" He replied grabbing the man's lapels.

"Someone had to. You were angry and she looked broken. You forget you gained power in marrying her while she lost her friends, reputation and options in marrying you. Read the note I'll be in the revolting lounge."

Pouring himself a drink, Vulpes sat on the edge of the large, Empty bed. Unfurling the note he read the hastily scrawled prose.

V,

I only wanted to protect us. I love you, I meant that. I only hope you can still love me too. Gone for a walk.

6

The amber liquid burned as he downed it in one go. She was afraid of abandonment. He had not particularly done anything to indicate the opposite. He had assured himself he wouldn't leave but he missed her presence.

They could survive this. All he had to do was wait.

Six was aware she was being followed. Of course Max had assigned a Frumentarii to follow her around but it was the second stealthier man that caught her attention...when she cared at least. Almost halfway through the bottle of drink she was starting to care little. This whole desert wants her dead maybe she should help them along a bit.

Walking across the vast expanse, Six wandered without direction until her pip-boy picked up a faint signal. Her curiosity piqued she proceeded further from the strip. It was as she reached the origin of the signal that her second shadow made himself know. The sharp pop in the moonlight and pain erupted in her shoulder. Footsteps rushed to her side but it wasn't the Frumentarius as expected.

"Boone?"

"Courier." he said darkly.

"Fancy meeting you here of all places in the desert." she hissed getting to her feet and stumbling back against a car. Darkness was beginning to fall. "You always said all I'd hear was a bullet."
"If I wanted you dead we wouldn't be talking."

Six sighed and got to her feet. Maybe letting Boone win would solve all her problems. "Well there's that I suppose. NCR must really want to interrogate me if you're holding back."

"They do and I just had to know the truth."

"Vulpes told you the truth in that hole you kept him in. I married with consent and stayed with consent because I love him."

"Why couldn't it have been one of us? We loved you!"

"No Boone, you all loved the idea of me and when I needed you all because the nightmares were tearing me apart you abandoned me. He's the only person who stayed and I won't give up anything you know that."

"Or perhaps we never knew you from the start. Only someone conniving could match the Fox." he raised his rifle as the sound of a camera whirring caught Six's attention. On the large board at the edge of the fenced area a picture began to form from a piece of metal in the ground. With her injury there was little chance of drawing quickly. Either Craig would kill her or take her in. Another sharp sound and she fell again as her shin began to burn. He really believed she was going to talk?

"Stay where you are Six and don't touch that thing!"

Six looked at the screen from where she lay, it bore the same greenish hue as her pip-boy and saw a single question.

**Are you there? Y/N**

The words blinked up at her and as Boone's gaze searched the skyline. Her limbs were already growing cold as she was heading into shock. Without fear, she reached for the keyboard and typed Y.

"What did I say?" he snapped pointing his rifle once more. "You just don't stop do you?"

"Never. Besides I have someone waiting for me at home."

As Boone took aim Six closed her eyes silently apologising to Vulpes for leaving him once more before something heavy hit her head and the world went black.

Vulpes looked across the Mojave as he nursed a drink from the Revolting Lounge. All was quiet and true to his word Arcade had hidden himself away in his room equally testy and anti-social. There had been no word of Six returning and he began to fear that she had truly left for good.

"Vulpes, I've got a Frumentarii here looking mighty worried. He's not a threat but comes under security. Please meet him at the front door."

"Alright you infernal machine." he sighed. Who would report to him at this hour? "Please summon Max to the front door as well."

"Yes Sir!"

Within minutes, Vulpes and Max ushered in the dust covered man. Blood stained his jacket and
judging by his posture the wound was fresh. Max frowned with concern.

"Vince, I left you on Courier duty."

"And I was." he hissed. "She was attacked by a sniper, he must have missed me in the dark. She called him Boone. He shot her in the shoulder and shin and with the intention of taking her for interrogation."

"And you didn't help?"

"I tried, but by the time I was close enough she touched a machine and it took her."

" Took her?"

"It knocked her out and in a flash like her transporter thing she was gone. When the sniper realised what had happened he left. I checked the machine but it was broken and there was nowhere to indicate where she was and came back straight away so you knew."

"Max. Wake Arcade, we need him to get the robots searching." he said calmly. "Vince, go back to the vault and get some rest and medical help."

"I...Yes Sir." the other man nodded and left immediately.

Vulpes headed inside the building once more. It had to be some cosmic joke, a person couldn't disappear out of the desert. Six herself had said that she couldn't transport them from Zion to the Mojave and vice versa. Just who had the power to do such a thing, and why did they take his wife?
Old World Blues

Chapter Notes

Tried something new for this chapter! Hope you enjoy it!

Six woke up briefly as bright, white lights shone through her eyelids.

"It’s awake! Disgusting!"

"Drug it again!"

She tried to force her eyes open and see who owned the voices but as the lethargy began to break there was a sharp prick and then nothing.

Big MT - Day 2

Dear V,

_The Auto-Doc here suggested I keep a diary of sorts to stop me going nuts here at The Big MT. So I suppose these letters are for you in case you ever find my remains or whatever is left of me. I mean it’s not like I’m wholly human right now anyway. The bastard brains in jars stole my spine, brain and heart leaving me Like an ...an abomination. I don’t even feel like myself anymore...if I knew what that was in the first place. I’m housed in a central hub called the Sink. The beds are clean and every time I go out I find more personalities for the appliances. It helps in a weird way, it’s not so lonely when you can have a screaming match with your toaster and the lights switches are jerks._

Still, I miss you. I miss our home, our people and even that fuck nugget Max. I hope Mercia is growing stronger and Arcade is happy. Sorry, you’d tell me off for being morbid but after two days in this hellhole with possessed corpses, roboscorpions and lobotomites things can feel a little bleak.

Let alone the fact they have lost my brain. I’m still linked electronically to it which is why I’m not brain dead but still...I don’t think my skin is ever gonna feel right again. I have been given the task to find Dr. Mobius and recapture my brain before I can leave but as I explore there is more here than I thought possible. The old world used people as subjects and judging by what I’ve found they were treated worse than Brahmin.

_You would hate this place Vulpes._

Shit, crying again. This place is the epitome of science and every bone in your body would be repulsed. I have a gun powered by a dogs brain for fucks sake.

I best go, one of the lights is getting whiny and flashing. The last thing I need is another migraine in my robotic brain. How that works I haven’t learned yet.
Big MT - Day 3

Dear V

Found some weird pre-war houses in a warehouse today. Very fucking strange. It turned out to be the homes of the jar brain scientists before the war. I made a new fried called Muggy. He's like a cute, mug obsessed Yes Man. I've found 3 more personalities today, the Sink AI seems pleased.

Still I can't leave yet. Gonna go look at this stealth suit facility next. If the Dr. Mobius is as powerful as they think then I need all the help I can get. I'm glad you're not here. Hopefully you're still in the Lucky 38 no doubt fuming, but safe. I...I still keep waking up with pain in my shoulder. The Auto-Doc says there's no Physical trauma, guess it's all in my head...robobrain...whatever.

I think I need a drink,

With love,

6

Big MT - Day 4

Dear V

I can't face it today. No more corpses, no more drooling men and no more talking suits. I want to go home. I just want...

Nevermind.

6

Big MT - Day 6

I found out where nightstalkers came from today. Turns out they were made by some scientist trying to create new life as a weapon. They escaped confinement and spread into the Mojave. If only the locks were better and these bastards tried to change the world then we wouldn't have to deal with those horrible beasties. Still, I found the lobotomites home and made peace with them, but I still lack the strength to break into the compound. The scars where they operated on me are still fresh and sometimes I want to claw them open and pull the metal work out.

I tried once. Managed to claw the stitches out and press my fingers against the metal. The fucking brain bots tranquilised me before I could tear anymore. I've gained half of the items needed to get to Mobius. I wonder what my brain is up to while trapped. Does it still think? Does it dream? I dream of you Vulpes.

I dream that we decided to 'fuck it' and leave the Mojave and return to Zion. I help Waking Cloud deliver medicine and treat the people while you train up the others and hunt. Maybe I even
convince you to wear that loin cloth more often...it was very convenient for evening activities. We could swim in the clean waters, free from radiation and I could kiss the droplets from your skin while we make love and if we had children...if...they would never know the sickness in the desert. Not that Zion is perfect. But we could make it work. We could be happy.

Gods above I regret fixing some of these damn appliances. Though the Juke Box has been a great listener, sleazy, but a good listener. Still, another day begins soon and I'm so close.

Missing you,

Six

Six lay back on the comfortable mattress of the sink, the faint crinkle of the plastic under sheet had almost stopped bothering her now but she supposed it was due to her being used to the clinical conditions of the place. Below she could hear the Think Tank still pottering away and trying to get back at Dr. Mobius who terrified them. To Six, he was just another leader with an overblown ego waiting to be taken down a notch with her trusty Maria. She quietly thanked whichever of Vulpes gods was watching over her today and prepared for her next journey into the crater. The relentless need to itch at her scars reared it's head but she tried to ignore it. The Auto-Doc warned her to careful in case of infection.

Today she was heading for the X8 facility for a second time in order to retrieve the data the Think Tank had requested. With what little supplies she had managed to scrape together she shouldered her pack and headed out. Standing at the base of the Sink, Six stared out across the warped landscape. Maybe today she could finally get the last pieces needed to go home.

Vulpes sat staring at the plans spread across the dining table in the penthouse suite of the Lucky 38. Yes Man chatted and rambled to himself continually and although it was an eerily cheery machine it let slip certain facts and information about the desert as it pondered it's existence. The Doctor had been irate after hearing of Six's abduction and even more angered by Boone's actions despite Vulpes explaining it was an understandable reaction from NCR sniper. Still Arcade had been inconsolable for a few days and had spent it down in the Follower's camp. Vulpes didn't blame Arcade. He could rationalise why Boone had acted the way he did but his rarely unleashed emotional side wished to rip the man limb from limb. However, if Boone was near enough to New Vegas to catch Six who knew where he was lurking now.

Still plans and contingencies needed to be made. Their base was operational and he'd already sent some of his best to infiltrate the dam. The world didn't stop just because Six disappeared. There were plans to be made and the arrival of President Kimball. Lanius would no doubt make an effort to kill the President. Was he going to counter and protect the president or aid his death.

"Still not sure what to do?" The Doctors tired voice filtered from the balcony as he made his way down. "Where's the big dope?"

"Managing the Vault. I'm waiting for the daily 6pm moan by the machine."

"Why are you still doing this?" asked Arcade pouring himself a drink. "You had fought before she left, you have no obligation."

"I have every obligation. She is my wife and I care for her. Yes we fought and no doubt we will fight again, but Six is mine as I am hers. And if you tell anyone I'll kill you."
"Cute." mocked Arcade. "Yes Man, give Vulpes whatever intelligence you have for President Kimball's visit. Everything that Six planned as well as current developments."

"Why help?"

"Because she cares for you. God knows why, but that girl has a habit of defying death and I think it'd be good if her home was still standing when she came back."

"Thank you."

"Alright Mr. Inculta, but I gotta say you're going about it the wrong way. See the boss lady needs Kimball alive after his visit. If he dies, when the Dam is conquered our free nation will get the blame and I don't think we can prevent the whole NCR knockin' on our door."

"So if Kimball lives, we get a scapegoat."

"Right you are buddy! Six wanted to make sure that if you were forced to fight the Legion, you wouldn't be at risk of repercussions. A new nation needs all the breaks it can get."

Vulpes sighed heavily.

"Having second thoughts?" queried Arcade.

"No, it's just the first time I'm trying to protect these morons. My men are going to think I've lost it."

"Well, we can always blame the Robot."

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**Big MT - Day 10**

I fucked up. The facility turned out to be a continual loop of tests with increasingly harder foes and stealth required. I think even you would have struggled in places. But then there was a fucking nightstalker and my stimpacks were dry and...I'm not sure how I managed to drag my ass through the last run but I couldn't leave until I had everything I needed. It was the last piece of the puzzle. By the time I could transport back to the Shnk I was close to unconscious again. How many times can I keep doing this? How many times can I cheat death before my tab is finally called and I can finally leave this mortal coil. Still once I fully recovered from the latest batches of testing I am ready to take on Dr. Mobius.

I am sorry about deceiving you even with your best interest at heart. And...and you were right Vulpes. I did do it for me. I did it because I was scared of losing you and I was scared of losing what I'd been seeking this whole time. Home. Neither of us are saints nor are our hands clean. But we had...have something real and I was afraid of losing it. I keep reminding myself that there is still a chance of us still being together; a small hope on these late nights. For the idea of coming back to an empty tower...well Arcade will be there at least. The Auto-Doc has been mending other parts of my body while he's been piecing me back together. Apparently the my abdominal wounds had left deeper scars and hidden damage. The bots been enjoying himself as he finally has something living to practice on. Maybe at the end of this I'll be a more functional human. I don't know if I'll write again. It feels too much like my final words. I've made peace with myself and no matter what happens, I tried.

Tired now,
Big MT - Day 12

No more.

6

Big MT - Day 14

Made my first run to Dr. Mobius' shelter. So many Roboscorpions. Heavy Metal shielding. Need more firepower. Need Meds.

Hurting,

6.

Vulpes concealed himself among the crowd of well-wishers and brainless followers of the NCR. It was risky him coming himself, but he had to be certain things would go off without a hitch and the only way to do that was being there himself. His agents were in place and had identified the sniper's nest and bomb on the plane. That left any potential members in the crowd. Lanius was not known for his subtlety but Vulpes had been shown how wrong he could be. Keeping the rim of his hat low he scanned the crowd. There were more operatives mixed in with the crowd but it was an unseen sniper that had him concerned. Boone would no doubt be here and he was taking a great risk being here. Still Yes Man had stated it was essential he be there and Kimball stayed alive.

Moving closer to the front of the crowd he headed towards the building and with the help of one of his men, he hid in a nearby shadow in case he needed to intervene. He scanned the crowd and noticed the masses seemed excited but there were also many skeptical faces. His fingers wrapped around the knife concealed in his jacket, a gun would be unwise.

"Hey V, Yes Man has the units in place if needed."

"Thank you Doctor."

"Good Luck." He sighed leaning against the building as the vertibird landed. Still there was no sign of Lanius.

"Didn't think you'd be dumb enough to come here." hissed a familiar voice. "Yes that is a gun."

"Thank the Gods, I don't know what I'd do if it was something else."

"Why are you here? Where is she?"

"Nice to see you too Boone. I don't know where Six is, last I heard she was kidnapped after you shot her. She could be dead for all I know," he sighed realising Arcade may still be listening. "I'm here to prevent Lanius killing your stupid President."

"Why?"

"Because I'm a changed man."

"Try again."
"Because his death would bring the NCR's wrath on the desert and there's enough to deal with as it is."

"Not entirely selfless then."

"Is anything? That said, you need to get better intelligence officers. I've already stopped a bombing and a sniper today."

"Because of course they weren't yours."

"No, actually, my men wouldn't have been found."
"Sir?" Vulpes looked over his shoulder to see Jules with his gun to Boone's head.

"Good work J." Vulpes pushed Boone's gun away and turned to look at him closely. The man was a wreck. "Tell me, did you enjoy hurting her? Did it satisfy your need to punish your enemies? Just like Carla and her prior history of skinwork? Or do you truly believe that you were saving them?"

"You son of a-" the hammer was pulled back.

"Ah, she told you the same answer as I gave. Poor, lonely Boone. Is there no-one out there for you? Look at the crowd, there's a man heading to the stage with a knife. Go now and maybe they'll even give you a medal."

Vulpes stepped aside and Boone saw the man step forward. Duty overrode revenge and he charged forward in time to stop the attacker. In the chaos Vulpes and Jules walked out the front door towards the rendezvous point. He felt a grim satisfaction at winding up and denying the sniper his anger again. It was something.

"Everybody pull out. Mission Successful."

"I need my brain back." Six stated coldly,

"Do you? You seem fine without it. And does it even want to go back with you? Maybe you should ask it. It's quite independent, has all manner of opinions. Tell you what - I'll leave it up to your brain. If it wants to go, then fine. If not...well, you should respect its wishes."

"You're fucking with me right? If the robotic brain those floating pickles have installed is meant to pick up my thoughts. How can it be independent from that?"

"Perhaps you should ask it that? A good swim in a mentat bath has given it a new lease of life after it's previous owner. Anyway if you're not going to kill me I have important work to attend to."

Six surveyed the darkened room with the apparent mad scrawlings of the brain bot covering every surface. Some of it was familiar from books she had read an knowledge that was just out of reach. But yet she still didn't understand why she had been taken and cut up like a slab of meat.

"Dr. Mobius, a moment. Please. Why steal my brain?"

"Well you're something of a homily. Er. Anomaly? You're really quite special, and not in the
cranially-challenged way. You see, you are the most successful brain extraction experiment ever performed here at Big MT. A victim of your own success, as it were."

"Not for the first time."

"If you were to go back with what your brain knows about the procedure, well your brain could be popped back in and you could walk out of here. Can't have brains moving around of their own volition."

"But I would be me again, not a separate entity."

"Of course, you can believe that, but that would be when it trick you and decided to take up residence elsewhere."

"So you're saying now, my brain is independent to my body, when it's returned it may remain a completely separate entity."

"Precisely. I must say you're not as dumb as it makes you out to be."

"Thanks, I guess. But then why this ruse of scaring the Think Tank?"

"They have all forgotten themselves. And not only themselves, but the world, sense of time and history. All that is left is what's here. I reprogrammed their chronometers, geometers, and cartography programs so that this is now their world, here, Big Mountain. It was a merciful lobotomy, really, thinking back. They were my friends but, sometimes they would take things too far. The world isn't ready for that kind of too-far-thing-taking. That's my professional opinion, anyway and I am told I was once quiet professional. In any event, you showed up at the Think Tank and because you had a cranial injury in just the right place..."

"Ain't that a kick in the head." Six muttered.

"Bullets in the head are usually much more fatal, and yours was a light case of bullet-in-the-head-itis. But it was enough for the Auto-Doc in the Sink to change its programming to fix the problem and the brain extraction technology for once, worked. This gave those idiots knowledge they shouldn't and couldn't possess. With that knowledge the procedure could be reversed and they can use it to mush and modify their cranial selves into hosts to slip past the Radar Fence, I'm sure of it. And once they're off the reservation..."

"So it was all a fucking coincidence again?" Six said softly as sadness welled up again."Wrong place, wrong time."

"What is this saline solution coming from your eyes?"

"Nothing. It's nothing."

"Well we both know it will not be good news for anyone should they escape. My threat broadcast is designed to instill...and install fear and along with the emotional download other date rides the fear carrier wave. It prompted them to focus on retrieving those technologies and bring them to attack me. And coincidentally...pardon my language...all those technologies are needed to put your brain back into it's skull properly."

"They didn't have the body or skill to do all the facilities and get the technology so not only did I provide them a key to an answer but I was also an easy mark to do their dirty work."

"Something like that I suppose...your brain can explain more."
Six looked to the large glowing tank in the centre of the room. The pink, wrinkled mass was floating quite content in the chemicals the doc had provided it. But yet seeing her own brain gave herself a greater sense of disconnect. She was in her body like she remembered but she was also there in the tank. What would she be when they reunited. If they reunited. Stepping up to the tank, Six knocked on the glass and was surprised by a masculine voice.

"Oh God it's you."

"Nice to see you too...I guess." she replied sitting in front of the glass container. "How are things?"

"Wonderful now that I'm no longer in that death trap of a cage. You can get so much more done when you're not managing bodily functions, avoiding bullets or daydreaming about Vulpes."

"I don't waste time..."

"Come now dear, you can't lie to me."

"Alright, he did look good in his tunica." she replied with a smile.

"I guess you're here to convince me to take you back." continued her brain. "Not going to happen though I'm afraid."

"Why not?"

"As I said, in here it's clean, less likely to have bullet holes and sepsis with all those horrible vaults."

"It can't all have been bad, surely?"

"It wasn't, the wedding was rather entertaining..." it sounded wistful. "But then you had to fuck it up with all your insecurities."

"It's wierd hearing my thoughts as a masculine voice and I'm not insecure."

"You hoarded an army of robots, a pre-war building, a vault, three gangs and a space laser just in case you needed some extra fire-power. If that doesn't show insecurity..."

"I'm NOT!" Six shouted.

"Keep up with that anger and he probably will leave. I mean have you realised what he said was true yet."

"I did."

"Took you long enough."

"I don't remember my brain being such an asshole."

"I don't remember where I was born because of you but you don't see me calling names."

"I was frightened, alright? I was frightened I'd lose home. After the bullet I had nothing and what little headway I was making was hampered by our nightmares and people leaving. We were
always left behind. I just didn't want to be left behind again."

"Even though you chose the one man who would alienate you from all the connections you've made. Who's faction was so fundamentally different to our beliefs?" the Brain snapped.

"Vulpes is not a good man, not by a longshot. Hell, he's done despicable things but so have I."

"But yet you followed him like a lost little puppy."

"I followed him because he respected me and in his own way loved me. The others won't care they'd already left me. We're both monsters."

"Then you see why I'm reluctant to rejoin you both if you're so degenerate."

Six sighed and leaned back against the tank. She was tired. Another barrier stood between herself and her goal and this time it was her own brain. For once couldn't things have been easy?

Big MT - Day 17

Suffice to say nevermore have I despised myself. I understand the aversion to pain and not wanting to go back out into the hellscape but there are good things too. I just have to convince my brain that we're better together. Look at me, I'm even referring to myself as a second person. I knew you always liked me for my brains but this time you could probably date just that part of me. Dr. Mobius is still continuing his threats but they're empty. I'm going to try again. Man I could use a drink.

With Love,

6

"Alright Brain, is there nothing that would draw you back to the desert?"

"Well if we could move the entire tank I may enjoy the view from House's penthouse suite."

"In seriousness..."

"I would miss Vulpes conversations. He was a clever man. I would miss some of the lesser functions. Particularly the rush after a Nuka Cola, but in general no. I don't miss it. Though I do feel nostalgia for the warmth of your cranium. Look at it from my perspective. Here, I have peace, quiet and safety, barring the odd rogue scorpion. In your head, I've got poison, radiation, grisly injuries and biological functions."

"You never explained how Mobius found you."

"We were forgotten about...again. Seems we're both cursed to either be memorable or missable."

"I shouldn't miss you though, You're meant to be controlling all these things."

"No I'm not! I am the seat of all reason and logic in our little partnership. All those...feelings that motivate you, that sense of righteousness and that rush when you help someone, do you know where those come from? Glands, They come from glands. Free of the tyranny of your
ape-like and primitive endocrine system. I can see how foolish your motives are."

"Oh come on! Some of that's so much fun!" Six replied "I didn't realise it caused you so much
distress."

"Well, maybe next time you hear me telling you that raising two baby deathclaws is a bad
idea, you'll listen."

"Antony and Cleopatra are my babies."

"That could eat you."

"Exactly, they're good babies." Six replied. "Look, I want to go home to Vulpes. I can't do it
without you. What's it going to take to get you to change your mind?"

"I'd like to find a nice little place to live, maybe in Goodsprings, and settle down where we
won't get shot at. Not as often at any rate. But since that doesn't seem likely...what's your
plan."

Six thought carefully for a moment before answering. "Ultimately I will kill Lanius slowly, set up
a new power in the vacuum of our victory and retire to the Lucky 38 or Zion. But to do that I need
to leave."

"You think the Think Tank will let you go? Even if you got me back to the Sink they'll use us
both to escape into the desert. Tell me Courier are you willing to unleash their evil on those
you try to protect."

"Then help me! Help me protect the wasteland by stopping them! We have a duty to our people
even if...even if they don't want us anymore."

"There go those glands again. Is the endorphin rush you get from doing the right thing really
that good?"

"Can you sit there in that tank knowing that the Think Tank went after every man woman or child
to lobotomise them? Just look at what they did to us for fun! You're part of me, I know you don't
want to let that happen anymore than I do."

"Well, I suppose I do miss those endorphin rushes when we save the day. All right, what's
the plan then? and...Oh for gods sake don't cry."
Of course the bloody machine didn't spew her out in front of the Lucky 38. She was just lucky Vulpes didn't shoot her. Though, judging by the fierce grip on the knife at her throat she wasn't quite sure he wasn't going to just end it after all.

"Are you real?" He had questioned softly as he searched her eyes for understanding.

"Yes, I am Courier Six. God's be damned Vulpes, back off." He relinquished his grip and stepped back still guarded as Six moved around the room. Clearly he still held a grudge. "Don't worry, I'll leave."

"Don't." He said quickly. "Just, don't. You were taken by a machine. You could be an imposter."

"No I'm the same old bullet ridden, stubborn Messiah you all expect." Six replied. "But you're right I could be a fake. We'll talk in the morning. You're still here so I'll take it as a good sign."

She probably should have been kinder, or more forgiving. She was meant to be the soft-hearted woman that others sought kindness from but Six couldn't bring herself to be that person. Her body ached and her skin itched from the recent surgery that had restored her body to a complete state. Yet against the Auto-Docs advice she had just wanted out now that her brain and body had tamed the Think Tank. At least the Sink AI's promised to be good.

Six headed for the lift upstairs and was surprised by Vulpes calling after her. She ignored him, her heart feeling hard and cruel after the weeks of isolation and horror despite the pain and need for comfort she was hiding. Silently Vulpes followed keeping a distance but watching her warily.

Yeah, I'd think I'd gone nuts too. She thought.

Reaching the penthouse, she tossed her bag by the mainframe chair and headed towards the bed. Sleep would make it better, maybe a little med-x. Still Vulpes hovered out the corner of her eye lurking and unsure how to act. His indecision was becoming less desirable by the minute. Grabbing a fresh set of clothes, she began to strip off her heavy armour on the way to the bathroom but kept herself covered until she could be behind a locked door. Still her guardian shadow quietly followed until the thick doors of the bathroom blocked him out. She allowed her anger to stew as she bathed and stared at the state of her body in the mirrors House had everywhere. The memories of lonely nights and missing home had become tainted with anger and pain. She wasn't ready for a big reunion or declaration of love. What she needed was anger and hurt to keep her alive like they had done all this time.

When she finally emerged cleaned, moisturised and perfumed she felt refreshed as if the grip of the Big MT had finally been relinquished. Yet still her guard dog followed as she headed back to bed.

"I'm not going to kill your people Vulpes so why not quit following me!" Six snapped poking at the sore wounds between them both.

"It is not my safety I'm concerned about. I'm worried about you. I know you wouldn't hurt us..."

"How touching." She replied with venom. "Forgive me if I'm doubtful because the last time we
spoke you told me otherwise." Her voice grew louder.

"You had lied to me."

"Of course I fucking did! You were my enemy for many months before this," she indicated back and forth. "And even when we were married you were still dangerous. You don't do emotions beyond duty and glimpses of deeper affection. I had to be sure..."

"To protect yourself."

"In case you haven't noticed Vulpes most people want me dead. Even more since our wedding. I have only what I have claimed for myself. Hell, I knew that if Caesar ordered you to kill me you would no matter what had formed between us."

"We were meant to be a team."

"We were! We were a team! Look me in the eye and tell me you never left something out to protect us."

But he couldn't. Six paced back and forth in front of him as words and anger filled her mind. Better to hurt him and keep him away than let him see the darkness growing within. She could almost hear her brain's complaints at how she was acting. Too much gland interference.

"I made my choices Vulpes to protect me, and selfishly to protect you and any child we would have. All I wanted was to have that. Weak as it sounds I didn't care about the desert as long as I had that. But now I see having a home isn't enough. I need to shape it and make it for myself."

Vulpes remained silent. "We still can."

Six laughed weakly at his statement. Did he truly believe they could go back? That he could forgive her deception? Could he ever look at her the same way again? The questions were like water on the fire in her fight. Her shoulders slumped and she came to a standstill. She fought the ugly tears as they threatened to fall. She couldn't allow hope and happiness to fool her again.

"You can't want that. I know you despise deception." She said weakly. "You can't want me."

"Because you say so?" He snapped. Six flinched. "You can't possibly know what I want, you didn't ask."

"I know so. There's nothing left to want."

"Bullshit." He cursed moving closer but refusing to touch her.

Six stepped back and pulled off her shirt and trousers having forgone her underwear. In the light of the room she bared her new scars; dark and bold from the multiple surgeries and the patchwork of scars across her skin. Vulpes stepped back eyes wide. It was cruel and humiliating to show him her faults, the scars from her previous near death experience now pale in comparison. But it had the effect she wished. She wanted him to be repulsed. She wanted him to be disgusted because she certainly was.

"I was taken by scientists to a place called the Big MT and can you believe it the trauma my brain suffered thanks to Benny was actually the key to their survival and escape. This..." She indicated the scar up her chest. "Was so they could cut out my heart and this one my spine. Once they finished with the simpler organs they then removed my brain...funny thing was I didn't die. No they filled me with metal to make me appear human and held me hostage until I found all the shit
they needed to escape because I couldn't leave unless I was whole. Except they lost my brain and all hope was gone. I met Nightstalkers, corpses trapped in suits and horrors you can only imagine Vulpes. Things that would make your stomach churn."

Vulpes watched Six warily as she continued hot tears staining her cheeks.

"But you're here." Vulpes said softly cupping her cheek and treating her like glass. "You survived."

"I survived?" She growled backing away from what kindness he tried to give. "No Vulpes I don't think I did. Not wholly. Why are you still even here?"

"Because the last thing I heard was my wife was being kidnapped after being shot in the godforsaken desert alone."

"Well now you know why."

"Of course I do! We were going to make it right! I wanted to make it right and then Boone had to come and mess it all up!" He grabbed Six and held her close. "You were gone again and it was like Camp McCarran all over again and it killed me."

Six didn't respond, numbness and guilt replacing the burning feeling as he held her tight.

"I was so worried." He replied hand tracing down the sensitive scar on her spine. "I don't care about scars Six. I care you're breathing. I care that you're angry because you are alive. You're alive." He repeated as if reassuring himself. "I love you. Deception and scars and all. You're mine. You're mine and you came back."

Six felt the tightness in her chest ease as his reassurance soothed her hurting but it was too soon to be little more than triage.

"I need to be alone right now." Six said quietly stepping away from the warmth she desired. "I need space."

"Space? We don't tend to do well apart."

"No, but I need to...we need to...It can't just all go away easily. I was dissected Vulpes. I'm not whole at the moment. I want this...want you...but...I need to process everything."

"Alright, but stay in the 38? No going outside."

"I'm going down to the presidential suite. You can stay here if you want. Just in case I feel like making Yes Man do anything"

"I trust...fine. But this isn't over." he said with surety. "We will need to talk."

"When I'm ready."

Six redressed and took the lift back down to the familiar setting of the presidential suite. But yet the thought of her own chambers was off putting. Vulpes was right they would have to talk about it and deal with it at some point. They needed to sort out where they stood and as the potential future leaders of this new nation they needed to be unified. Or she needed to be alone.

"Shhhh someone's out there." an unfamiliar voice hissed from behind the door to the common bunk room.
"Probably Arcade." said a voice that definitely belonged to Mercia.

"Not Arcade." said Six. "You decent?"

The door to the bunk room slammed open and Mercia filled the doorway. The young woman had gained weight and looked less broken than she had before. In fact she looked rather flush.

"You're alive!" the young woman shouted throwing her arms around Six. "Thank fuck for that, all these men were becoming insufferable!"

"Well I'm more pleased to see you well Mercia and certainly more assertive."

"I have Arcade to thank for that. He wanted me to be able to take on anything and uh...I've met someone and they've been helping me."

"I'm guessing that's the voice I heard."

"Yes," she blushed. "Arcade gave her permission to stay...shit Six, are you really OK? You're crying."

"Am I?" Six touched her face and noticed the wet streaks.

"Come inside. We're decent."

Six let Mercia usher her into the semi-dark room.

"For fuck's sake is there anyone who isn't trying to seduce my fucking doctor?" Six joked at Dr. Usanagi's wave. She took a seat. "I swear you're all gonna get me killed because y'all can't keep it in your pants and my Doc is dissatisfied."

"Oh no Six, I like Mercia, she likes to please and I enjoy rewarding her. So as long as you're nice to her, I'll keep mending your boo boos."

"Sweet lord, Mercia keep the orgasms going cause that's almost a nice bedside manner." Six laughed from her perch on the Vanity stool and took Mercia's hand as she stood at her side. "Are you happy? Does she make you happy?"

"Yes." Mercia said resolutely.

"Then tell me if I need to shoot anyone who hurts either of you."

"We will." replied the young woman kissing her on the forehead. "You're not my Mom though."

"Course not, fuck all you want. Just be safe. Though I suppose I can always go back to the Sink to get healed..."

"The Sink is for water..."

"N...Nevermind." Six added.

"Why aren't you with Vulpes?"

"I don't...I can't see him right now. You know we fought. Arcade is many things and one thing is for certain, he has certainly gossiped."

"Yes, well...you two seemed inseparable..."
"Well keeping military grade weaponry out of Legion hands wasn't looked kindly upon by the Menfolk."

"Fuck 'em." said Usanagi. "Fuck 'em and take the power for yourself. They'll only fuck it up."

"True, but what if I'm tired of all this shit? What if I want to fade into obscurity."
"Still no-one better than you Six. You're fair, kind and not a man in a skirt."

Six laughed weakly. "You're right. But we'll need to work things out together. I can't be ruthless like Vulpes can, and in the days to come we're gonna need all the help we can get. I should probably leave you two ladies to rest..."

"Do you wanna stay?" asked Mercia. "That OK bunny?"

"Bunny?" teased Six.

"Shut up." replied Mercia elbowing Six in the ribs.

"Fine by me."

"Lose your clothes." said Mercia. "They can't be comfy."

Six tentatively took off her trousers but left her shirt on. What would they think if they saw the scars? Unlike Vulpes, she didn't want to wound them but...

"Fuck Six, what happened to you?" said Usanagi stepping from the bed and lifting her shirt. "Do you need me professionally?"

"Nah doc, I just had a few scientists decide they needed a new toy."

"Fuck, that's bad."

"Was the first time I woke up and my spine, heart and brain were in a jar, but after a while you got used to it."

"Wait what."

"Yeah I know it's all sorts of fucked up."

"Yes and it's killing my buzz. It's late. All of you get your asses in this bed." ordered the Doc.

"Ah that's the bedside manner I pay for." replied Six.

The doc climbed in first before Mercia joined her lover and Six was the other half of the sandwich. She lay on her side and facing away from the couple as their breathing grew heavier and Six felt them begin to sleep. She was about to drift off when a slender arm wrapped around her waist.

"You're safe Six." Mercia mumbled sleepily. "I'm glad you're home."

Six took her hand under the covers. Yes. She was home.
Hope you enjoyed!
"Where the fuck is Muggy?" Six hissed half asleep as she felt around in the dark for the alarm clock. "I thought we agreed on no alarms? Why are the switches so quiet?"
Six fumbled in the dark but it was the movement of another person behind her that brought her back to reality.
"What's a Muggy?" mumbled Mercia sleepily.
"Nothing." Six replied getting out of the bed. "Nothing now anyway."
"As your physician, I'd say that you were suffering a concussion or your brains were scrambled but considering your history..."
"Good morning to you as well Usanagi." sighed Six. "Let's just say that my last roommates were more chatty."
"Fair enough." replied the Doctor. "Now kindly piss off so I can properly wake up my girlfriend."

Six chuckled and headed out into the dimly lit corridor. It still must have been early in the morning if Yes Man hadn't turned on the lights fully. Stretching, she entered the kitchen determined to make some coffee and a halfway decent meal when she heard the sound of movement in the kitchen. Slowly, she stepped inside and saw Vulpes standing at the stove cooking something that smelled delicious.
"Good Morning."
"Good Morning Vulpes." replied Six noticing the tension in Vulpes body. "Did you sleep well?"
"Better than I have been sleeping. Want some food?"
"Please."
"Where did you sleep last night?"
"With Mercia and company. It’s odd having it be so quiet."
"Quiet?"
"Where I was staying, the Sink, there was always noise. The appliances had AI chips. A bit like Yes Man except they ranged from friendly to irate. They were always arguing and it was...comforting I suppose. I wasn't alone. The Lucky 38 is just quiet."
"I think I would find it maddening, all those voices all the time." He said handing Six some coffee.
"They certainly were big personalities." Six smiled taking the cup. "What are your plans for today?"
"The Vault is self-sufficient and my operatives will stick to orders. I had not intended to leave."
"Then would...could...can we talk? I wish there was more time but there is much to do."
"Of course." he said continuing to cook.
Vulpes took Six's quiet company as a sign that something could be salvaged from the chasm between them. Six was certainly different from her usual self. She was colder and more withdrawn but if the trauma she experienced was true then she had good reason to be skittish. With open war drawing closer they had to form a united front if they wanted to make a unified desert. If only he could get through to her.
"I'm not sorry I lied to you at first. Back then you were so focused on Caesar and Lanius that you
couldn't see what else was out there. I am sorry about later. I just wanted to keep my family safe and it became easier to lie than tell the truth. We can stop Lanius and if you wanted...you could take back the Legion for yourself. I won't stop you."

"I think we're a little beyond the Legion now wouldn't you say?" he replied without anger. "Lanius corrupted the ideals of Caesar. Even if I were to return, the men are corrupt, insolent and would never to listen to me. Our future is here as much as I loathe to say it. Do you intend to side with the NCR? The securitrons would boost their numbers and you could probably force them to give you a pardon."

He watched as Six sipped her coffee her shoulders relaxing somewhat.

"No NCR. We're going to make the desert independent."

"Independent?"

"As in no NCR or Legion. Just you, me, the Frumentarii and a few allies forming an independent nation. The detail are a little rough but it's something to start with."

"Us? In charge?"

"Well apparently I'm an indestructible mailman who is seen as a martyr and I'm married to a great strategist who also happens to be their biggest fear. Between my "legend" and your cunning we could make a good go of it or leave someone better in charge and ride off into the sunset."

"I doubt they will want me in charge."

Six shrugged as he mused on the merits of her plan. It was certainly daring, but one which relied too much on a robotic force.

"We are going to need more caps to establish trade and other necessities to prevent an uprising due to lack of food and resources."

"What about Cass? She has caravan contacts. Could be begin to establish our own?"

"We need to think about funding it. Despite your hoard, yes I found it, we need a good pot to ensure there isn't a shortfall."

"Alright, money, allies and strategy. It's a decent start."

Vulpes turned his focus back to the stove. His mind already raced with possibilities and contingencies that needed to be made for the plan to get in motion. He was almost done when smaller arms wrapped around his waist and Six pressed against his back. Not wanting to spook her away he continued to cook as she held him close and snuggled against his back. Carefully, he placed the tongs down and covered her hands with his.

"Six, there a lady out front called Veronica, says she's a friend?"

At the sound of Yes Man's voice, the fleeting touch they had shared ended as he allowed her to move away.

"Let her in and send her to the presidential suite kitchen."

"Alrighty!"

"Veronica?" he asked.

"She is a scribe for the Brotherhood of Steel. Mean right hook with a power fist. I met her when I was wandering and I thought she was trying to patch things up with McNamara."

"When did this happen?"

"A while ago. Yes Man said we needed to get some allies if we were going to go independent. So far I have the Brotherhood on side, but I've yet to get to the Boomers."

"We'll factor it into our plans." he stealing a gentle kiss.

"WHAT THE FUCK!"

"Hey Veronica!" chirped Six. "I guess I didn't tell you I got married?"
After calming the irate Scribe down, Six had finally convinced her to sit down and join them for breakfast. But judging by the looks she flicked Vulpes she was still skeptical. At least she hadn't tried to shoot them. After sharing stories and dancing around the unsaid issues, Six began to clear the table and Vulpes left to meet with his men.

"Finally, I didn't think he was going to leave." sighed Veronica spreading out in the lounge.

"He's a little protective at the minute. Boone tried to kill me."

"No kidding."

"Yeah, a lot has happened." Six smiled sadly.

"Well, how about you give me the condensed version?"

"Later, what's brought you back? I thought McNamara would keep you busy."

"He is, well they all are but I got a message from Elijah."

"Your mentor?"

Veronica nodded playing the garbled and odd recording. "After he disappeared I didn't think that I would hear from him again but...Six?"

"That voice. I've heard it before."

"That's Father Elijah. He was the elder of the brotherhood before McNamara. I doubt you would have crossed paths."

"One sec."

Six headed to the crate she kept her holotapes in and began to search through. It was recent, and the Elder had a rather distinct manner and tone. Her fingertips brushed the rough metal of the toolbox where she kept the tapes from the Big MT and the memories came back. Withdrawing the box she returned to Veronica and placed it on the table.

"I heard his voice at the Big MT. It was a whole complex built by pre-war scientists which became more like a horror show. I found holotape notes about experiments by an Elijah but didn't put two and two together until now."

"This... it's Elijah alright." repeated Veronica, stunned by all the new information. "The others always thought there was something off about him but I didn't think he was capable of something like that."

"The message he sent you, was there anything you could make out?"

"Nothing just talk about a heist and more tech than McNamara could manage."

Six sighed. Another place with savage technology. "Do you want to check it out?"

"I thought you might be able to help before I realised Mr. Fox was here and you look...tired."

"We're preparing for war Vee. The Mojave is on the brink of change and I'm right in the centre."

"What's really been going on Six?"

Once she began it was like breaking a water pipe. The pain and trials of the last year came pouring out as Veronica listened and gave silent support. The Scribe realised how much she had misjudged how lonely her friend had been and how much they had all isolated her. For Six, it was nice spending time with someone new and relatively unbiased. Vee didn't fully understand Six's choices but at least she accepted her friend was still the same underneath. After the constant walking on egg shells around Vulpes and even second guessing herself Six relished the calm acceptance and support.

"I'm sorry I...we weren't there for you."

"Some of us were." Came the snide reply from the doorway.

"Arcade!"

"Good to see you Vee." Smiled the doctor, "It's nice to have someone with a little more common sense and self preservation."

"Poor you."

"Come on, move your ass Six."
By the time Usanagi and Mercia emerged from a day at the clinic the three old friends were deep into a second bottle of hooch and camped out across two sofas pulled together to make a pseudo bed. By the time Vulpes returned, the cabinets had been raided for snacks and Six felt...happy. It was new and fragile but still she felt more whole. Vulpes watched from the doorway talking to Arcade while avoiding cushions being thrown by Veronica. Feeling bold and the need to remind him that he was hers, Six climbed over the couch, albeit on wobbly legs, and kissed him passionately. The alcohol erasing her fears and worry. "Welcome home." she smiled as he cupped her cheek.

"Bourbon?"
"Potentially? Are you mad?"
"Not if it makes you smile." he replied softly. "I'll leave you profligates to your wicked ways." he smirked avoiding another pillow.
"I KNEW IT!" yelled Veronica. "You totally like him calling you that."
"Fuck off Veronica!" replied Six pouncing on her friend. "Go and get the bloody cushions."

While Six socialised and broke the odd glass, Vulpes considered the latest reports from the evening. Max had been thorough in his investigations despite his reluctance to accept Vulpes forgiveness of the Courier. The Legion camps seemed to be growing with new recruits and resources which meant that resources that were already strained were under more pressure and the opportunities for dirtier tactics was rising. Perhaps a little poison could bring on disease? Focused raids could even lower what supplies could be delivered. He jotted ideas in his notepad to discuss their viability and implement new orders in the morning. It felt good to get back to work once more.

"There you are." Said Six slipping into the room ignoring her slight slur.
"You got me. I was hiding in plain sight."
"Can I..." She indicated the other side of the bed.
"Of course."
Silence fell once more as she began her evening routine. There was too much silence these days. Too much even for him.
"What did Veronica want?"
"She received a broadcast from her mentor. She was asking if we could investigate. Well, if I could."
"No."
"She agreed, thought I looked tired. She'll probably ask again though."
"And you need me to be the big bad wolf."
"Yes." She replied with a relieved smile as she climbed into the bed and into his arms.
"Well it's a definite no as I don't want to lose my wife to the desert. Again."
"I don't want to be lost again." She mumbled snuggling closer.
"Then I'll keep you close forever."
"Kinky."
"Only for you wife. Only for you."
Boomer Territory

Chapter Notes

As always I apologise for delays. Things have been pretty difficult for me and I couldn't quite get this to flow as I wanted but things seemed to click together. A soft interlude.

I hope you enjoy!

4.11.19: Edited the chapter as I'm changing direction I really couldn't get into Old World Blues.

Vulpes stared across the scarred wasteland in front of Boomer territory. It had been a joint decision to approach the Boomers and build up support while Vulpes' men ran subterfuge and worked on further allies. However, he didn't agree to this course of action.

"Remind me again why this was a good idea?"

"Because we can use their artillery on our enemies."

"If we're not blown apart first." He replied sullenly.

"Well some didn't wake up with a can do attitude."

"Forgive me for having a fully functioning self preservation system."

The deep whistle of another projectile indicated the next barrage so the two sought cover further back from the ridge they were scouting from.

"At least every barrage is regular."

"Trying to get to the Boomers?" A voice called from the shack they had sought shelter by.

"Depends on who's asking." Began Six. She felt the telltale shuffle of Vulpes drawing his blade from beside her.

"Name's George, I'm somewhat of a prospector with a mean gambling streak. Boy, you ain't the first to try and cross that mess, but I got a hot tip on how to keep your head."

"So what's the catch? There's always a catch."

"300 caps upfront. If you don't get blown to hell and can make it back to me I'll double your money."

"And if we die, at least you make a quick buck?" Replied Six.

"Something like that."
"Are we really trusting the random man who loots corpses?"

"Hey it's a perfectly legal bet..."

"Not the point." Snapped Vulpes. "Trusting random fate once again?"

"It's worked so far."

"Look you don't have to take the wager. You could try running that gauntlet like at the other poor fools who became a beautiful red mist."

"Funny." replied Vulpes.

"Ignore him. I'll pay the 300 caps." Agreed Six unstrapping her pack for her wallet. "But if you're not here when we get back..."

"You'll hunt me down and break my knees?"

"Something like that." Smiled Vulpes wickedly.

With the transaction complete Six took the scrappy piece of paper from the gambler's hands and read the instructions.

"That's it? Not heavy in the details is it?" Huffed Vulpes.

"Well that's half the fun isn't it?" Smiled the gambler.

"We can do it."

"How are you so sure lady?"

"Didn't you know? I'm the immortal Courier. A measly bombardment can't kill me."

"You will be the death of us both!" Yelled Vulpes in the break between artillery fire.

"But what a way to go."

"No. No. Absolutely not. You've gone mad."

"Better than drowning."

"Mad, mad. You've finally lost it."

"Next gap in two." Six noted.

They braced against the wall they were hiding behind ready to pounce when the ground stopped
shaking. Six lead the way at a fast sprint, jumping and weaving over the rubble and remains until they reached the next decent cover. Vulpes dived in behind Six knocking her to the floor as the first explosive landed.

"This is nice." Six giggled climbing from under him. "So how do you want to die?"

"In my own bed, when I'm old and infirm, surrounded by my many sons...and daughters leaving a legacy outlasting Rome."

"Hey, where am I in this idyllic future? Two more till the next gap."

In the next break they darted forward again, gaining further ground. The fine grit thrown up by the bombs was beginning to become an itchy layer staining their skin.

"One more run and we should be in the supposed safe zone."

"Wonderful."

"So...as I was saying, where am I?"

"Isn't it obvious?" he chuckled, "You clearly die first. I will mourn you appropriately, of course, but I will find joy elsewhere. Perhaps I would finally have time to take up a hobby."

"You rat bastard! I knew you were after my money."

"And children. Don't forget the children. And legacy."

"I hate you."

He grinned knowing he had won. "Two more dear wife. Don't forget I have our retirement planned and I think we need practice making heirs."

"I really hate you."

"I don't know how you survived the bombardment but I gotta say you both have balls."

Six gratefully accepted the water handed to her while Vulpes downed his own glass.

"I've been told I'm lucky." Replied Six.

"Or nuts, I can never decide which." Added Vulpes.

"You are on very thin ice. Mr. Fox."

"Still, I knew some savages would finally get past the bombardment and I was beginning to lose hope that I would see in my lifetime."

"Savages?"

"People from the outside. Ferreting around in the dirt like animals. Savages."

"Not the worst thing I've been called." Six noted. "We actually came looking for friendship."
"Perfect! If you haven't already guessed we're a little isolated up here and as much as the youngers feel invincible we're going to find ourselves needing help one day an no means to do it."

"So what does that mean for us?"

"We'll you scratch my back, I'll see what I can do about convincing the others you aren't all drooling savages."

"Peachy. Just...peachy." replied Vulpes.

"Can you pass me the wrench?"

"Here you go."

Six smiled as she passed the wrench over to Jack as they worked on Loyal's plane. It seemed that there was no end to the odd jobs of the isolated group. Vulpes had been run off his feet with various tasks and clearing out the ant's nest and as he was the best swimmer he had been tasked with attaching the buoyancy aids to the sunken craft. It seems they had deemed him the dogsbody while she worked in the hospital and newly recovered plane.

"Six!"

"Vulpes! You're back."

"And you are with the brat again." he said more reserved than usual.

Six cocked her head at Vulpes comment. It wasn't the first time he'd expressed annoyance at the young mechanics presence but she had dismissed it as him being overprotective but was he in fact jealous? She stood and cleaned her hands on a rag and studied her husband closely.

"Anything capture your interest in particular Six?" he enquired noting her focus.

"Nothing in particular." she smiled. "Walk me back?"

"Are you finished?"

"I think I'm done."

Six and Vulpes headed to the small hut they had salvaged for their own and prepared some water to clean up and prepare some gecko steaks for dinner. It was at times like these she missed Zion. The simplicity of life outside of the city of lights was quieter and relieved them of the burdens and demands of leadership and gave them a chance to be together. It was these moments she relished the most.

"What's on your mind?" Vulpes queried as he dried himself down and wore only boxers.

"Zion and being free."

"Good memories?"
"Of strange cocktails and firelit nights" she smiled as he sat on their stolen couch.

"That really was a good celebration." he replied with a sly smile.

Six left the remains of their meal and joined him on the couch pushing him back so she could straddle his lap. He looked at her with such wonder and awe that her fears and anxieties could be blown away as she ran her fingers through his short hair and cupped his cheek. She loved his eyes. Six wriggled under his touch as he ran his hands down her sides to rest on her hips.

"My jealous Fox, what am I going to do with you?" she purred leaning forward to pepper his face with soft kisses. "I love you."

"Hmmmnnn." he hummed in pleased response.

"Try not to look too smug." she chuckled.

"Hard not to." he replied "When I have such a prize sitting on my lap."

Six smiled and shifted enough so that she wasn't pressed over his hips. The hunger in his eyes evident already.

"Perhaps I can persuade you not to worry?" she teased tugging at the hem of his underwear and rubbed his already growing length.

"I can be open to persuasion."

Six leaned forward and kissed him passionately as he ran his fingers through her hair and pulled her closer. Her soft whimpers breaking the silence as they enjoyed each other's touch. When Vulpes hands began to wander, Six took change pushing him back against the sofa and slipping to her knees. With a wicked smile she kissed and mouthed at his clothed cock earning a pained moan from her lover. Taking her time, she teased him until the gentle grip in her hair grew more insistent. Slowly, she released his cock from the confines of his boxers kissing the revealed skin and already leaking head of his cock.

"By the Gods woman, you will be the death of me."

Six continued at a leisurely pace licking and sucking him as she slipped a hand below her underwear.

"I love it when you are eager love," he growled. "Have you been missing me?"

Six replied with a hum against his cock.

"Not much more love, I want to finish inside you."

Six sighed but continued her quick strokes.

"Siixxxxxxx stop your wicked ways..." he tugged her off his cock.

"How can I when you sound so good?"
Vulpes glared tugging her hair to bring her closer. There was no malice in his eyes only hunger as he pressed featherlight kisses against her neck.

Six stood and took a sip of the Nuka cola on the table as Vulpes watched her closely. Feeling bold, she lifted her thin shirt revealing her bare body.

"More" his order was quiet but absolute.

Six allowed her sleep shorts to pool around her ankles leaving her in the nude. Insecurity gnawed at her resolve. She was a mess of scars now, not the flaw free woman from their wedding day. She knew he still viewed her with affection but they had yet to be intimate since Zion. Vulpes stood and stepped closer watching her with curiosity.

"You are beautiful." He said softly pressing a gentle kiss to her lips, "nothing has changed."

"You must be blind then."

"Or you must be losing more brain cells. You are still the most beautiful and deadly creature I have known. If you doubt my ardent desire for you then let me remedy it with action. I am going to devour you my love and make you fall apart so that the entire base can hear you."

"Sons and daughters right?"

"Of course...now, go and lie on the bed."

The next day Six could still feel the sweet ache of the previous night as she set out to work on the plane once more. Vulpes had taken his time kissing each and every scar on her body until she had begged him to take her. She didn't doubt her beauty after that.

"Morning Six, how are you today?" said the young Boomer.

"Hey Jack, I'm all ready to get to work today. Hey, what's got you all in a twist?"

"Well, I guess there's a girl I like and I want to get to know her but she's not one of us and Pearl would say no."

"I didn't think you had anyone pass near?"

"She's not, I mean she travels with a caravan. We see each other through binoculars."

"You want me to talk to Pearl?"

"Would you? I mean yes please!" Jack bounced for joy and pulled Six into a hug.

Of course Vulpes had to walk into the hangar just then. Six blushed and pushed the young man
away as Vulpes stormed towards them.

"Can I borrow her for a minute?" He growled not leaving room for a response.

"Sure we haven't started yet." Called Jack as Vulpes tugged Six further into the hangar behind some crates.

"Vulpes it was an innocent hug..."

"I know!" He snapped and softened immediately. "But I don't like him fawning all over you."

"He wasn't I swear!" Six began as Vulpes pinned her back against the haphazardly stacked crates.

"Well perhaps he needs a memo."

His hands began to quickly undo the buttons of her trousers before she could protest and lifted her ontop of a nearby crate which was still hidden from view. Six caught on to his plan as he stripped her trousers and boots off leaving her panties exposed and a smug Vulpes.

"Wh-what are you doing?" Six hissed as Vulpes pulled her closer to the edge of the crate.

"I am going to please my wife unless she says no."

"But what if?"

"Then the brat will learn something."

Six nodded and her lover stole a brief kiss before pushing her back on the crate. The warm tickle of his breath on her inner thighs made her shiver. Vulpes used his power to tease soft kisses and sharper bites to her inner thigh as he worked his way closer to her center. Six bit her lip as he stripped off her underwear and parted her legs once more. At first he was gentle warming her up with soft touches and flicks of his tongue but soon his touches grew more insistent and Six struggled to keep quiet as he brought her closer to the edge.

"Vulpes...we'll be caught..."

"Only if you keep moaning so loudly." He said thumb stoking against her clit as his fingers kept her on edge.

"Are you alright Six? I heard a shout."

Of course it had to be Jack.

"I'm alright just stay there." Six called in a panic.

"Vulpes is pretty mad." said the young man.

"He ...ah...is not known for his sunny disposition! I'll be back soon."
"Vulpes, don't be too mean, she just promised to help me get a girlfriend!"

"I won't be too mean." Vulpes replied, lips wet from his teasing. "I just need to discuss something with my wife."

"Oh...alright then. I'll just be...over here then."

"He's gone now." Hissed Six trying to push Vulpes away but he wouldn't relent. "Please Vulpes, oh god!"

"Come here." He growled helping Six to sit up and encouraged her to wrap her legs around his waist.

Six lifted herself up and pulled him into a searing kiss as he slowly entered her tight heat. Six moaned softly aware of the audience not so far away but the risk of getting caught added extra thrill. She ran her hands over his shoulders and scratched the soft Tufts of his hair as he began to thrust slow and deep.

"You're maddening." He growled against her lips. "Beautiful...and mine."

"You're persuasive." Six replied. "Intelligent...and mine."

Vulpes kept a steady pace drawing out pleasure rather than seeking a quick end. Six muffled her moans and cries against his neck marking him roughly with her mouth. With a wicked smirk he began to rub her clit with his thumb and Six moaned louder.

"Sweet wife, so eager for me. Let them hear you."

"Dear husband, so hungry for more."

"Will you two hurry up!" Loyal's shout broke the heated atmosphere between the ardent lovers. Vulpes chuckled as Six hid her face in horror.

"Of course Loyal, I'll return your engineer to you shortly."

"If only I were forty years younger..." Grumbled the old man as he walked away.

By the time the couple emerged Loyal was already deep in the guts of the plane while Jack worked on the exterior. Six felt dazed in the afterglow and fumbled for her tools before getting started on the panels. Sometime later, a red faced Jack sneaked over.

"Do you think Vulpes would give me tips? You know... for my lady friend."

Six didn't stop laughing until dinner.

"Well I never thought I'd see the day when we'd be able to say we could fly again." Pearl said proudly beside Six. "Loyal looks so happy, the youngers are all working together better and we
may even have some new blood if Jack doesn't trip over his words."

"As we said Pearl, we came here for friendship. You know there is war coming. The Legion won't stop until everything is under their control. I don't expect you to put yourselves at risk by abandoning the airfield for battle but if there is any support you can pass our way it would be beneficial."

"I guess he normally does the negotiation." said Pearl. "You're kind Six and kindness doesn't always survive war. Let's see if we can get this old crate flying and then maybe we can offer something more explosive."

Six sipped from her canteen as Loyal and Jack made the final adjustments and Vulpes talked further with Pearl. The old woman was right. She didn't want anyone hurt from this little community. They were just like the people in Zion. If it wasn't for outsiders coming in to interfere with them they wouldn't have any issues and if she had her way she would have walked away content that they could be future allies. That was why she needed Vulpes' cunning.

"A cap for your thoughts."

"I wish we didn't need their help." Six replied passing the canteen to her husband. "It reminds me of Zion."

"Understandable. They have been kind to us and are a rather interesting bunch."

"I don't think I can ever make those hard decisions to sacrifice or send people to their deaths. Managing my friends was tough enough."

"Kindness is not weakness. I have learned that from you. But sometimes choices are difficult. The lives you have sacrificed weigh heavily on your shoulders but as a leader you must make those choices in order to keep them all alive."

"Good thing we're a team then?"

The harsh thuds of the engine turning over broke through the conversation before shuddering to a halt once more. Muffled curses and the odd bang came from the cockpit before they tried it again and again turning over the engines. Six climbed up and fiddled with the main rotor before adding a little more grease and injecting fuel directly into the engine itself. It would either fly or burn rather well. Loyal flicked the switch and the engine began to chug once more and kept spinning before slowing winding up to speed.

"Well goddamn!" yelled Pearl in a cheer with the other Boomers. "Looks like you've got a friend!"

It was early evening by the time they packed up and returned to the Strip 600 caps richer. Yes Man greeted them with glee and promises of a massive pile of messages. With the little vacation over it was back to the grind once more. In their final moments alone in the lift, Six stole sweet kisses before they were inundated with news and gossip. Six hoped that one day they would find that peace again but with the impending war that was growing increasingly unlikely.
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