The Battle of the Hoover Dam claimed many lives and two people are responsible for it. Two Couriers on their way to destroy the Legion. But when a group of Legion runaways tries to seek refuge in the Mojave the two Couriers are fast to track them down.
Omnia mea mecum porto


It couldn't be real. It couldn't happen.

Two people couldn't be responsible for their demise.

The whole fight lasted for an entire day. The Legion burning so bright no one could tell if it was night or day. The flames burning their flesh were so intense it blinded them as bullets and knives tore through their bones. Bodies fell on the ground endlessly, their numbers laminated restlessly, all falling like empty dolls on the dusty ground.

The smell of charred flesh and dry blood setting inside their bones, creeping up their lungs, suffocating. They were suffocating, coughing, crying, trembling, their hands still clenched on their weapons, their screams drowned within the litany of howls deafening them.

The Legion died tonight.

The Legion died with Caesar. But the Battle of the Hoover Dam was the last straw.

Two otherworldly beings leading the pack ripping through their numbers. The first one, the Giant, slashed his way towards the Legate, armed only with his deadly fists and his blade. He always knew when and where the next blow would come, always repeating the same pattern. Dodge. Block. Slash. Never stopping, nothing seemed to be able to slow the man down, no matter how many recruits would crash against his flanks.

The second one was the worst one. Bombing the place with a nameless screech. Covering the advance of her accomplice with her explosives. Scattering their forces easily. Too fast and too small for anyone to reach for her. The second a machete came buzzing near her she would disappear behind a smoke screen, leaving behind the crater of her grenades, taking down whomever was reckless enough to get near.

The Legion was helpless.
Pushed back by two profligates.

The Giant reached the Legate and everybody watched in horror as the two Titans fought. No one dared intervene, and no one could. Bombs left by the ginger freak littered the path.

They all watched as the Giant tore away the Legate's mask.

They all watched as he ripped away the Legate's throat with his bare hands.

They all watched as the Legate slammed his blade in the Beast's leg in a last breath.

They all watched as the Giant roared in pain and victory.

They all ran when the ginger Devil unleashed all she had on the remaining troops.

They didn't have much time.

They didn't have much.

They had nothing.

Aurelius could still see the Decanus' helmet. Dead Sea ordering his remaining men to retreat. The Devil and her bombs looming over the blond. He was far. He was too far. Aurelius tried to reach for him, his shout unheard in the middle of the screams of agony filling the camp, his hand too far to grip the other man before a grenade detonated. The Decanus fell, the colour of his blood melting with the crimson of his toga and the gory dust. Aurelius kept charging toward his Decanus, his lover, his reason to live slowly dying on the ground like a slaughtered dog.

A few horrified recruits tried to shake their leader awake. They did not want to die here. They wanted to live. They wanted to run. But Aurelius saw them still holding on Dead Sea despite the chaos slowly wrapping around them. Another bomb exploded near them but they couldn't leave. Crying like lost children. Terror visible on their faces. Another explosion, one of them fell on the ground. Four were left, still shaking Dead Sea urgently.
Aurelius pushed the recruit between him and Dead Sea pulling the Decanus in his arms, yelling the man's name as he pushed his helmet away. The Centurion brushed the blood and hair out of the man's face, struggling to see his face through his tears, pressing the smaller body against his chest, blood and fire still erupting around him and the four terrified recruits all holding each others. He did not care if he died now. Nothing mattered. Not like that. Another recruit fell dead by their side. Three left. The Legion was dead. Dead Sea was dead. He could die for all he cared.

"Reily... you're hurting me..." A rasp. Aurelius moved away, seeing the blond's eyes opened behind his messy locks. Aurelius burst into tears, hugging the smaller man like he expected him to turn into dust and slip through his fingers. Another bomb exploded but Aurelius' armour took the blow, the man barely noticed. "Reily... We need to get out..."

Aurelius nodded weakly in the crook of Dead Sea's neck. He hauled the blond up in his arms, other detonations made him stumble. Between him and the open door of the Legate's camp nothing but dead bodies and mines. The three recruits looked up to him, eyes still full of tears. Hopeful.

"Alright. You all stay close. I'll get us all out."

Aurelius couldn't stop running, he could barely believe he made it past the Dam. He probably got shot a couple of times, but either his armour took the blow or he was too exhilarated to notice the sting of the bullets. He could hear the irregular breathing of the three recruits that followed him. The three of them limping behind.

One of the recruit has been sniffing loudly since they made it out, the Centurion started to wonder how his nose wasn't bleeding yet with all that but Aurelius could understand why he would be crying after escaping this massacre, himself was rather close to burst into tears again. The other two, Leo and Attila, remained silent, struggling to catch their breath while staying hidden behind the bigger man.

Dead Sea was breathing heavily in his arms, Aurelius knew the Decanus wouldn't last long if they didn't took care of his bloody wound quickly but the Centurion knew perfectly they were still within the NCR's range.

Aurelius took cover when Boulder City's remains was in sight. Most of the NCR troopers seemed
to be gone for some reason. The few Aurelius could spot seemed to be very agitated and packing their stuff clumsily and running away like hellhounds were about to chase them. It didn't reassure Aurelius the slightest but he needed to escape, he needed to find a safe place to tend Dead Sea's wounds.

He could hear the Decanus' breath being more and more ragged each passing minute, he needed to at least stop the heavy bleeding coming from his wounded arm. The blond's face looked insanely pale and clammy, he probably only had minutes before dying of blood loss. Aurelius cursed under his breath, opting to hide under some of the city's debris to tend the life-threatening wound before leaving the place again.

The three recruits followed him without a comment besides the loud sniffing coming from the recruit. The Centurion led them inside a small crater half covered by a fallen wall, offering them a decent cover to rest a little but would offer no escape if they were spotted. Aurelius urgently laid Dead Sea down, finally taking a closer look at his wounds as the other recruits curled up in the cracks of the crater.

The left side of the Decanus has been torn away by the explosion, his flank was protected by his armour at the time but his arm has been lacerated by the blow, his bones piercing through the flesh at several places. Aurelius knew the Decanus would never fully recover from this wound. Would they make it back to the Legion camp they would kill Dead Sea 'out of mercy' without even trying. He still needed to try. Stop the bleeding, try to save the arm. Luck always favoured Dead Sea. Maybe he would recover like he did with the one that blew away his knee.

He needed to remove the bloody clothes, stop the bleeding, fix his arm, he couldn't do it alone.

"Alright, I need help... Leo! Come here!"

"Yes, sir!" Barked the recruit immediately hushed by the Centurion.

"Keep it down! The place is crawling with NCR dogs!" Hissed Aurelius furiously, he did not want to die in this pit after making it out of the Legate's camp. Not with Dead Sea in a critical condition "I want the lot of you to keep it shut! And you stop crying! Leo, come here!"

The Centurion started to remove Dead Sea's chest plate and rip the top of his toga with Leo's help. Most of the Decanus' flank was covered in superficial wounds, nothing the Centurion cared about, he needed to take care of the arm. The other recruit kept sniffing behind them, Aurelius could hear he was trying to hold it down but the permanent noise was running on his, o so thin, nerves.
"For the love of Mars, stop it! Do you want us all to be spotted?! You're a man act like it and stop whining!" Growled Aurelius above his shoulder, throwing the trembling recruit a deadly glare. The kid held his nose tighter, a strangled whimper escaping from his tiny form.

Aurelius went back to Dead Sea, putting the broken bones back into place while Leo held the Decanus still. Despite how painful the handling must have been Dead Sea didn't wake up, still laying motionless on the ground, Aurelius almost wished he did. At least he would know his beloved was still alive.

"Flag."

"What?" Grunted Aurelius. The recruit slapped his hand on his mouth, his sniffing still untamed.

"Game." Whined the recruit sobbing helplessly, pressing his palm against his mouth harder like he was trying to shut himself down.

"Shut it recruit! We can't afford to be spotted!"

"Fate."

"Recruit if you don't shut your mouth right away I will knock you out myself!"

"Please, sir! He's not doing it on purpose! He's-"

"Trigger!" Yapped Caius louder, slapping himself nervously, pinching his lips closed and failing, crying out yet another word. He was now sobbing and clawing at his own mouth like he was trying to force it shut.

"Silence! Are you crazy?! You'll get us killed!"

"Please, Caius! Calm down! You'll get us killed!" Attila immediately regretted his words as Caius yelped again. "Wait, no! Caius, we're safe, ok! No one will get us if you stop yelling! Please,
calm down! Relax! Caius, don't bust our cover!" Bartered Attila, knowingly putting himself between Caius and the furious Centurion, massaging the recruit's shoulders. Except Caius could feel the trembling of his hands, making him whimper another word. Attila could feel himself freaking out, he didn't want Caius to be harmed to protect the rest of them. He didn't deserve it. He deserved to see the end of this alive and well not in this sordid crater.

"FORTUNE!"

Aurelius crouched, frenzied, ready to lunge on the recruit should another sound escape from him. He didn't care he was one of Dead Sea's men, he would not allow him to get them killed. Even if he had to harm the other one in the process.

"LUCK!"

That was too much, he will end this man now and there.

"Well, luck and fortune for me, maybe. But not for you."

Aurelius froze. His eyes focusing on the intruder. A ginger gremlin purring amusingly above them.

"I knew I saw some Legion boys escape. In the end they caught themselves. How nice of you!"
Aurelius’ squad meets Courier Dusty and her partner face to face and try to get away

Chapter Notes

This chapter contains an amputation scene at the end, skip it if you don't want to read this

See the end of the chapter for more notes

"I knew I saw some Legion boys escape. In the end they caught themselves. How nice of you!"

"CRAM ! BIRD ! DICE ! BULLET ! APPLE ! DOG ! SPEAR ! MOON ! DITTO ! BOVE ! VINO ! VERITAS."

"SOMEONE SHUT HIM UP BEFORE I DO!" Roared Aurelius furiously only managing to make the recruit cry louder.

"My, my. I almost feel bad for blowing the lot of you. But you know I can't really let you mess things up around here. New Vegas is kinda ours now so Legion is not exactly welcome here."

"Wait ! Please ! Don't kill, Dead ! Kill me if you will but let him live !"

"Hey ? How do I let a dead thing alive ? Did you got a bullet in the head too, big boy ?" Mocked the Courier with a diverted smile, the freckles on her cheeks twitching along with her smile, her orange hair ruffled around her round face, cut short and irregular like she did it herself with a pair of unsharpened scissors. Despite her small frame there was something unsettling about her, maybe the permanent smell of gunpowder and fire, reinforced by the aggressive smell of burnt flesh from the Legion's camp, following her like a crow follows a blood trail, helped the impression.

She seemed willing to play, giving them both a rest and something new to worry about. Aurelius could see the incendiary grenades hanging from her belt, it would take a second for her to end their lives. He needed something, anything, to distract her, find a solution, maybe find a way to have her
by arm reach. If only she was at arm's reach.

"I'm talking about him," explained Aurelius warily, pointing Dead Sea to the ginger, hoping she would take pity on them, "He's wounded. Please, if you save him I will pledge myself to your service!"

The profligate seemed amused, judging him quietly. Aurelius hoped she would find his offer interesting enough to accept. He felt miserable that way, being evaluated like a brahmin. He could guess that was a feeling common to Legion captures. It was a trick of course to get her out of their way, but he felt horrifically humiliated. He needed to save Dead Sea. He needed to get him out quickly. He couldn't dally here while the Decanus was losing his blood.

"SAVE HIM OR GET OUT OF OUR WAY!" Roared Aurelius jumping up on his feet, ready to dive head first regardless of his own health. She snatched a grenade from her belt and held it out in front of her with a calm smile. She slowly slipped her finger inside the pin ready to remove it in a blink.

"Bad move, child. I was willing to let you and the kids go but you leave me no choice, here."

"FAMILY! FELIS! CURSE! ANIMA! TACE! VIVERE!" Cried out Caius holding onto Attila like a lifesaver, the spotted recruit quietly clenching onto the yelling boy, tears silently streaming down his eyes, pressing himself above the younger recruit, ready to shield him with his own body.

"No! Please! Don't kill us!" Yelped Leo holding up his palms, as if it would be enough to protect himself from the explosion. "Please! Please! Please-"

"Dusty, wait."

The ginger looked behind her with a dull surprise, still holding the grenade loosely inside her hand. "You shouldn't be up, Domi. Your leg can't hold the strain yet."

"I can handle it." Declared the giant peacefully, finally making himself visible to the rest of the legionaries. With the sun behind his back and his large cowboy hat, it was impossible to see his face. But they could see his long duster still reeking the blood of the Legion, limping towards the pit where the little group was holed up, staring at them from above a few seconds, barely taking a single glance towards the mortified recruits, sobbing and hiccupping what was left of their breath, still trying to strangle their lament as a last and foolish attempt to retain their pride.
The giant was focused on Aurelius, the bigger man still trying to discern the stranger's features. After painfully long seconds of staring the Courier finally crouched showing his face to the group. The man finally was visible to them. A dark face, long blasted back hair, his jaw covered with a scruffy beard, a scar crossing his forehead from his hairline to the bridge of his nose, two orbs made of melted gold piercing through them calmly.

"Do you remember me, Centurion?"

Aurelius squinted, the voice was familiar, and the eyes did ring a bell deep inside his clouded mind, but he didn't have times for games.

"If you intend to kill us, do it now but don't lose time in petty games." Growled the soldier, fighting to hide the tremor in his voice. At least he would die with Dead Sea. He always hoped they would die together. He couldn't ask for a more glorious death but one by his lover's side, no matter how bitter it was.

"I was your Decanus at the time. I sentenced to death for high treason," Aurelius' eyes widened, of course it was him. He didn't had that beard back then. But who else was enough of a beast to survive and destroy the Legion with such an inexhaustible fervour. "Or am I mistaken?"

"Domitius. Decanus Domitius." Aurelius couldn't move. He remembered the man now like he never left his side. Despite his fall, the man's skill remained legendary, rumours about the Praetorian guard considering him as a valuable asset, close to be named a Centurion when he was found guilty of high treason. Aurelius biggest satisfaction, and his biggest fiasco. "Of course it would be you. You raided the Fort! You raided the Legate's camp! With the very method I taught you myself! You will never rest until the last have us has bitten the dust, won't you?"

The recruits were looking from Aurelius to Domitius, the giant still crouching, perfect tranquillity floating on his face. How could such an imposing man look so serene despite the violence he held up inside? Domitius simply waited for the Centurion to stop yelling before speaking again.

"I always looked up to you, Centurion. We will let you go."

"What?" Strangled Aurelius.

"What?" Squeaked Dusty.
"Let them go. They will do us no harm. They are deserters, not legionaries." Stated Domitius getting up, massaging his wounded leg, a large trail of blood seeping through the bandages. The wound looked bad.

"How do you even know that?! What tells you they aren't trying to fuck shit up around here until someone shoots them?!

"Because he would not lose time trying to save a dying man if he was on a mission." Quipped the taller man humourlessly. Dusty gave him a bad eye, irritated by the know-it-all attitude of her partner.

"Wait! Why are you saying Dead Sea is dying?! He's only bleeding a little! He's not dying! He's not dying, right?! Right?" Pleading Aurelius falling back on his knees in front of the inert blond. He pushed back the clamped locks from his beloved's cold forehead, putting his heavy head on his lap as he kept petting him nervously. Dead Sea's breathing was nearly inaudible now, his lips turning purple slowly. "He can't be dying now... We made it so far..."

"Yeeeeeeah... sorry to break it to you but your pal IS dying. If he's not taken care of real quick he won't make it." Attempted Dusty with a pained expression that turned so odd it looked like mockery. Aurelius felt tears welling up inside his eyes again, his sob burning his throat as he tried to swallow it back, failing miserably. He inhaled sharply before starting to sob helplessly again. This time there was no bombs or fire around him, but it felt the same, like he was being stabbed through the heart, the beating inside his chest becoming so painful it was nearly unbearable. His stomach constricting inside his guts, his lungs struggling to take a full breath, eyes burning so hard he swore he would turn blind.

"Please... I beg you... I'll give you everything you want... my life if I must... but please... save him... I don't want him to die... please..."

The two Couriers watched him in silence, stunned by the force of the blow stricken at the man and how broken he was now. How easily he gave up for the blond. How desperate he was without his loved one. The three recruits were now perfectly silent, curled up together against a side of the crater, looking their fearless leader heartbroken and devastated over the Decanus.

"Uh... buddy? You're listening?" Tried the freckled one warily. Aurelius raised his eyes up to her, filled with hope and despair at the same time. "Listen, I may be able to save him but I can't promise you, ok? Let's get you all out of here. Plus Domi's right, there was enough blood shed today."
Attila was puzzled, puzzled and apprehensive.

The NCR seemed to be completely gone from the Mojave, like they vanished into thin air. The scout spotted at some point some troopers running away like the Devil themselves was chasing them. Attila felt like something he didn't knew was happening, the oppressing silence of the Mojave hoovering above them.

They all followed without a question, they didn't really had a choice, they lost all their weapons when the made a run for the Dam. The ginger one led the group while helping Domitius to walk. The NCR camp Dusty led them to was deserted, forgotten food, weapons, clothing, and ammo scattered all around like the ones there left without packing all their stuff. Several campfires were still burning and some food was left to cook on the hot coals giving the place a haunted vibe.

Aurelius was absolutely silent, clenching on Dead Sea, mumbling things to the Decanus in a Latin the scout could not decipher. The Centurion didn't even seem to register the fact they were walking inside a NCR camp in full Legion gear. The scout was hiding in the shadows on the empty tents, making sure Caius was close to him but not telling him why so he does not start acting up again.

"Oy mate, whys the place empty like this ? Its odd, innit ?"

"I don't know Caius. I don't even know why there are all gone." Mumbled Attila looking around for eventual traps. His friend hummed pensively, prodding the scratches on his face. At least the recruit had stopped clawing at his own face, the scrapes he inflicted himself would heal quickly, unlike Dead Sea's wounds. They were still tensed at the moment, their Centurion being clearly in no shape to defend them while the two Couriers escorting them in enemy's territory.

On their way for the camp Attila has been watching Domitius. The man was a wonder to the scout. The man was an ex-Legion soldier and yet made it out alive to become one of the Legion's worst nightmares, the spotted man couldn't help but feel a pang of envy toward him. The bigger man has been limping more and more on the slope, often relying on his partner to stop stumbling. His leg was in a really bad shape, the Legate's blow must have nearly severed the limb yet the man stubbornly kept walking.

The ginger accompanying him was also a curiosity in a different way. She clearly knew about Domitius' past within the Legion. How did she got to travel by his side, trusting her life resolutely. She appeared very relaxed despite the presence of the five legionaries, humming some unknown tune, seemingly unconcerned by the potential dangers that could fall on their group at any moment.
Domitius held the flap of one of the tent open, knowing it would be empty, how he did was still a mystery to him. Aurelius entered first, Leo on his heels, quickly followed by both Attila and Caius and finally Dusty. The Centurion set Dead Sea down on one of the ranger's cot, obstinately refusing to leave his loved one's side when Dusty tried to make her way towards the Decanus.

"I need some room if you want me to get shit done, kid. Just go on the other side, alright?"

Aurelius nodded and moved begrudgingly. Dusty started working quickly, her deft fingers removing what was left of the upper part of his toga and exanimating the arm and shoulder of the Decanus in silence before starting to fumble with her bag to pull out some medical supplies, putting a blood bag in place, ordering Aurelius to hold it up for her. On the other side of the tent, Domitius crashed on a cot, hissing softly between his teeth. The man pulled a small orange bottle and took a pill out of it. The wound on his leg still bleeding abundantly. But it removed nothing of the aura of danger surrounding him. Attila wished he was as imposing as him instead of his own lean stature.

"What?! It's out of question! I forbid you to take his arm!" Roared Aurelius furiously, nearly ripping off the blood pack with his waving. Leo and Caius slammed themselves against the scout's flanks, earning a pained yap from him.

"Listen, big boy. What's left of his arm is completely messed up. He can't decide for himself for now so I'll leave it to you," started the ginger pointing her bloody finger towards the Centurion's nose. "I will either cut his arm off, find him a fine prosthesis, and spare him years and years of intense pain and a potential and very likely septicaemia, or let it here with all the muscular and nervous problems even if I will never be able to give him his full motor abilities back, along with the high risk of infection that will result in his death or a traumatic amputation anyway."

Aurelius growled, gritting his teeth, looking back at the Decanus distressfully, fiddling with the blood bag and twitching impatiently, like he was hoping the blond would wake up and give him the answer. He shook his head repeatedly, pinching the bridge of his nose and hissing many times every time louder, his jerking motions becoming more and more distorted, before finally nodding reluctantly.

"Do it. Quickly before I change my mind."

Dusty huffed and started working quietly, plunging his scalpel into the Decanus' shoulder. The three recruits all looked away, Caius hiding his face in Attila's shoulder, unwilling to watch as his Decanus' arm was being severed.
The surgery took a painfully long time, Aurelius never looked away, not even a second. Enduring as he watched her cut through the wounded shoulder, slowly detaching the limb from the Decanus' torso. It took nearly an hour, a painfully long hour during which the recruits retreated in a corner of the tent, curled up together, struggling to ignore the sound of ripped flesh, cracking bones, and slick sewing.

And like that the Courier took the Decanus' arm away.

Chapter End Notes

This story is a collab with Dhole, it's a sequel of Say I Look Nice (when I'm not) (http://archiveofourown.org/works/5673082?view_full_work=true) Attila, Caius, and Leo belong to them

You can find us on tumblr with the usernames Trunekosama (for me) and Decani (for Dhole)

Feel free to send me your messages/comments/kudos and thank you for reading :D
Chapter Summary

The wounded group decides to settle in an abandoned NCR camp hoping to rest and heal their wounds. But Attila can't sleep peacefully...

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Attila shifted on his cot again, after taking care of Dead Sea Dusty sent them in another tent while she tended Aurelius' and Domitius' wounds before checking theirs. Attila only had minor flesh wounds, nothing to worry about, he suspected it was the same for Leo and Caius, but still, he couldn't rest calmly.

Maybe because he was in a fucking NCR camp. Vulnerable. Unwatched. Maybe he should take a watch and look around for dangers. Dusty was busy, both Leo and Caius were sound asleep, exhausted after the Battle, and neither Domitius, Aurelius or Dead Sea were in any shape to check around the camp. Maybe some NCR troopers would come back. Or Nightstalkers looking for easy prey. Maybe Raiders. Or even Deathclaws. Nothing the scout wanted to see when he would wake up.

He pushed himself up quietly, he didn't want Caius and Leo to wake up yet. He strode over Leo's cot and grabbed the gear he removed earlier. Strapping his chest plate back in place. Maybe he shouldn't go around wearing Legion gear. NCR soldiers were gone for whatever reason they left, but locals were probably not very Legion friendly. Mind you Attila himself wasn't really Legion friendly. He looked around but all he could see was regular jeans and leather jackets nothing that could offer a decent protection.

He sighed loudly, strapping the last pieces of his armour. He managed to find a old varmint rifle behind a crate, the gun fit strangely in his palm, it was very different from his spear or his usual hunting revolver. He couldn't remember ever using a rifle like that. It probably wasn't very different from a revolver. He checked the chamber, making sure it was loaded before leaving in silence.

The air was strangely fresh, like the retreat of the two armies took away all the heat from the Mojave. Attila inhaled deeply, savouring the brisk breeze in the air. The night was not fully set yet, a thin edging of light fading at the horizon. All lights were turned off but for the glow of New Vegas far away in the serene night. Attila couldn't remember when was the last time he had the time to listen to the placid gust of the wind. He still needed to check the camp before he could really enjoy the peace of the moment.
He readjusted the rifle on his back and headed of in the dark. He never visited the surroundings of Boulder City. He didn't like how unfamiliar it felt. All the little hideouts where an enemy could hide. He didn't doubt that he could get jumped by a rabid Nightstalker. The place still smelt like bombs and old dry blood in certain place and Attila suspected that plenty of Legion corpses rested under the rubble.

The scout heard a slight rumble and jumped nervously, checking around him, closing his hand on the cross of his rifle, aggressive silence surrounding him again. Maybe he just imagined it. Or maybe he didn't. He decided to take the rifle from his back and keep it ready to fire.

Plenty of long and sharp stones growing out of the irregular ground loomed over him, like the fangs ready to snap on him. He couldn't hear anything but his own laboured breathing. He marched along the broken walls, tensed like a spring. How he regretted losing his spear in the chaos of the Battle. A pebble fell from a high spot, Attila immediately backed up in a corner, scolding himself for being so jumpy. He left his shelter and walked the dark path surrounding the NCR camp, he wanted to go back. Where did he come from?

Attila turned over suddenly, behind him with the darkness falling on the ruins of the city everything looked the same. He couldn't be this far, right ? He left barely minutes ago, but would the others find him if he was attacked ? Would they hear him scream if they were under attack ? Was anyone still awake at the camp ? Maybe Dusty took a nap after healing everyone. Maybe he would die stupidly and no one would hear his alert them. Maybe he should have woken Caius up, or Leo, or warned Aurelius about his watch.

Attila was nearly hyperventilating, how stupid that was. Of course he wasn't in danger. It was just the wind. Just the wind. Just the wind. Just the wind. Just the wind.

The spotted scout forced himself to take deep breath, trying to calm his dangerously accelerating heart, mumbling to himself to comfort himself.

"Ok, ok. Everything is fine. Everything is fine. There's no one here. It's just the wind. Everything will be fine. Everything will be fine. I'm all alone. I'm all alo-"

"You sure about that ?"
Dusty stretched lazily, after spending hours patching up the blond Decanus she had to redo all the work she did on Domitius. The big man made all the sutures snap when he intervened to save the Legion boys. Dusty doubted the leg would make it. She was hypocritical that way, telling Big Legion Boy that she couldn't save his sweetheart's arm but still foolishly holding onto that hope when it came to Domitius. She had no doubt her companion could handle losing his leg, but she still wished to spare him all the re-education and potential trauma.

She went back to the Centurion in front of her, the man was nearly as impressive as Domitius, he got shot twice in the back and didn't even notice, barely twitching when she removed the stuck bullets and sewing the skin back on, along with a few other scratches due to the graze of bullets when he fled the Legate's camp. Nothing very serious but it would leave some memorable scars.

"Alright, big boy. I'll go check on the kids in the other tent. I guess you want to stay with cutie pie other there. Not you, Domitius. You're a cutie pie too of course but not big boy's cutie pie."

Domitius huffed amusingly, shaking his head with a faint smile. Aurelius simply nodded, putting his shirt back on silently.

The ginger got up and left the tent, knowing the Centurion was not a threat to Domitius, not if the blond could be endangered by the fight. She was tossed the Decanus' arm in a dumpster not so far from the camp, hopefully whatever Nightstalker that would find it would be contented with the appendage.

She slipped in the opening of the children's tent, smiling playfully, thinking she should come back later, when she saw the kids sound asleep. Two of them. She took a peek at the other side of the tent but saw no one else. Only two set of Legion gears remained. She remembered one of the children had vitiligo quite clearly and neither of the other two had one. She frowned, opting to shake the closest one awake.

"Hey, kiddo. Wake up." The recruit opened up his eyes, blinking, trying to focus on Dusty before recognising her, jumping in fright when he did. "C'mon, I know I haven't slept in a while but I can't look that bad. Back to the point, where's the spotted kid ?"

_____________________

NCR trooper. It was a NCR trooper. No. Two of them. Coming out of the shadows like fucking demons. If only he wasn't wearing his full Legion gear. If only he tried harder to find NCR armour. If only he took the regular clothing he had found before instead of running in the shadows alone like the idiot he was.
"Looks like we're going to have our little revenge. Fucking Legion is going to pay for everything else." Growled one of the soldier, pulling his 10mm out of his holster, not pointing it towards the scout yet.

Attila was stunned, the blood leaving his legs and arms quickly, clenching his rifle weakly. Clenching his rifle. His rifle!

Attila aimed and pulled the trigger repeatedly, waiting for a gunshot that didn't come.

"Ha! Legion always have shitty guns. They could at least give you a functional rifle before sending you out on your own." Mocked the second one pulling a combat knife out of his sheath, the legionary couldn't shoot them anyway. However he could run. He tossed the rifle in a last attempt to fight back, successfully hitting the closest one in the face before turning his back on them and running away as fast as his legs could.

He was the fastest recruit of Nelson, he doubted those random troopers could catch up with him. Maybe he could lose them. Lose them in this maze long enough to find his way back and alert the rest of the camp. At least he wouldn't die uselessly. The 10mm trooper shoot blindly, still dazed by the hit. A bullet whistled near his ear and another grazed his shoulder. He couldn't remember when was the last time he ran that fast.

He panted heavily, taking a turn to hide from the bullets, rushing through the narrow path, stumbling several times on the way. He finally spotted the lights of the campfires on the other side of the ruins. He took a wild turn heading towards the lights crazily, he was almost at hearing range, almost there, just a few yards and-

SLAM

Attila crashed in the dirt, holding his face, scrambling on the dirt to get back on his feet, only to be slammed back on the ground. Attila whined pitifully as a boot whacked the back of his neck, holding him down.

"Looks like we got a nice catch, boys." Rapped a new voice. Attila froze. This voice was the nightmare of all recruits. Not the voice in itself but the tremor so specific to the Ranger's helmet. It was a fucking ranger. A. Fucking. Ranger. The sole of the boot smacked his back again. "You're done moving, slaving asshole?"
Attila gritted his teeth, anger slowly replacing his previous terror. How dared they ? Call HIM a slaver ? Did they not know that half of the Legion's number were made of people sold to slavery ?

A hiss slipped between his clenched teeth, rapidly silenced by another blow. He couldn't care less, he want to shout to their faces, tell them about the life under the Legion reign, the permanent terror, about his own family being held hostages behind the frontier of their territory. An incoherent growl escaped his lips, trying to puff himself up under the ranger's boot.

"Shut it, bastard. We're not done yet." Growled the ranger kicking him in the jaw. Attila heard the two other troopers finally reaching their spot. "Took you long enough." Barked the ranger towards the other two troopers.

"Yeah, yeah. We're here now. That all that matters, right ?" Grumbled the one that got hit by Attila's spear-rifle.

"Yeah ! Can we have fun, now ? I want to see if the Legion soldiers can handle the torture they inflict on our troopers." Growled the second one toying with his combat knife, the flash of the moon on the blade glowing menacingly in the corner of Attila's sight. The scout's anger was immediately washed away, like a cold shower fell on his body. He would have sworn that his entire being stopped for a second.

Or maybe time stopped and everything else went too fast. His heart started beating crazily in his chest as adrenalin surged through his body. He could feel the struggle of his core, slamming against his ribs, his mind urging him to flee, sending every existing signal of alarm, he barely realised he had bolted away, making the ranger wobble away.

He dashed away, he just needed to be at shouting range, a bit closer, just a bit closer.

A bang a tore through the night as a burning white pain pierced his calf sending him to bite the dust. His call for help rang in the silent night, all he could hope for now was to be heard.

"Little rat tried to run away it seems. Fat chance, rat. I'm a fine shot." Spat the ranger holstering his hunting revolver nonchalantly. Taking his time to make his way towards the legionary struggling to crawl away from him. The ranger slammed his boot in the scout's ribs, earning another pained yelp from him. "Think you can run away from us, uh ?" Another blow clashed Attila's thin body. "None of your little friends did," the boot landed on his spine, forcing the air out of his aching lungs. "There's not a single living legionary but you in all the Mojave now," this time the
On this words the ranger pulled his knife out of his sheath and slammed it in Attila's hand, pinning him to the ground. Attila screeched all the air filling his lungs out in a long agonising howl. The ranger laughed out loud, moving his boot from the fingers to the top of the blade's grip, slowly jabbing the knife until the hilt pressed against the back of his hand. Attila whimpered weakly, too frightened to try to yank his hand away, fully aware that he could not escape with the bullet stuck in his calf.

A grim chuckled escaped from the ranger's helmet. "Good boy, stay down. Now, who's next ?" Asked the Ranger giving the scout playful kicks in the head as the two other troopers snickered darkly. Attila knew he was crying, miserably scrubbing his wet cheeks on the ground, trying to strangle his terrified hiccups. "Guys, I said who's next ?"

An explosion blew right behind them, sending dust and rubble over the scout's body.

"You're fucking next, profligate !" Roared Aurelius charging the ranger, slamming into him with his full strength, the ranger crashed feet away from Attila. The scout finally dared raising his head. The Centurion was dominating him, a broad machete clenched in his fist, burning fury focused on the ranger in front of him.

"Yeah, big boy ! Show him what you're made of ! Wreck this dickhead !" Yapped Dusty happily jumping by Aurelius' side like an over-excited puppy.

"Don't worry about that, Courier. I'll tear this one to shreds." Growled the Centurion before assaulting the ranger. Attila couldn't help but stare in awe as the bigger man slammed into the ranger again, ripping away the pieces of protective armour like they were made of paper then slashing the exposed meat with his machete. Blood seeping all over the ground, splashing the Centurion's face and chest. The ranger didn't yell, or maybe he tried but his voice died out, or maybe the slice in his throat made it impossible.

"Hey, kiddo ? You listening to me ? You hurt ?" Chirped Dusty, crouching exactly where the ranger was before the onslaught, totally ignoring the fist fight going on near them. Attila opened his mouth to answer, coughing loudly when a strangled croak escaped his throat. "Take it easy, kid. Just tell me if you got stabbed somewhere else, alright ? And by stabbed somewhere I mean somewhere else than your hand." Attila just shook his head negatively, taken aback by the complete light-hearted tone of the ginger.
"Having a nice chat ?" Huffed Aurelius coming back from his fight drenched in blood.

"Yes ! A lovely one ! Your kid is a bit roughened up but he should be fine ! I don't think the blade touched the tendons so he should be alright ! But I'd rather remove it when we reach the camp, so I don't slice them by accident you see !" Tweeted Dusty patting Attila's shoulder warmly.

"You're the healer. You know better than me I guess." Mumbled Aurelius reluctantly. She did knew better when it came to the amputation of Dead's arm after all.

Dusty simply nodded and started to handle Attila's hand. The scout whimpered, struggling to fight the urge to yank his hand back. She swiftly pulled the knife out of the ground by moving the hand up, leaving it stuck in the scout's hand. "There, kiddo. Now get up. We'll get you to safety."

Attila tried to obey only to fall back with a yelp when he tried to put his weight on his wounded leg.

"Ouchey ! You forgot about the wound in your leg when I asked if you were hurt ? Bah ! It's only a flesh wound, I can sew it back just fine when we get back to the camp." Attila nodded shyly. What a shame to be spotted in a weak position like that by his Centurion. He didn't belong to the Legion but the man still came to his rescue like he was one of his own flock. Aurelius crouched in front of the scout as Dusty pulled him back to his feet.

"Climb on my back, Attila. I'll carry you over there."

"Sir ! I'm not-

"Just climb on my back, now !" barked the Centurion, startling the recruit to the point he nearly fell back on his ass. Aurelius growled, scolding himself for the outburst. "I will not allow you or any of Dead Sea's recruits to get wounded anymore, you hear ? Jump in, now. I'll keep the lot of you safe, now. Come on."

Attila obeyed warily, wrapping his arms around the Centurion's broad shoulders, careful about the knife stuck in his hand, allowing the bigger man to haul him up on his back.

"Let's move out, Courier. Lead the way."
I hope you liked this chapter, feel free to comment/review/leave kudos they are always welcome!
This story is a collaboration with Dhole: Attila, Caius and Leo belong to them
You can find us on tumblr with the usernames: truenekosama (me) and decani (dhole)
Caius is waiting for Aurelius and Dusty to come back from their rescue but Domitius unsettles the recruit a bit too much.

I know this story is starting slowly but things starts happening at some point I promise

Caius shuddered, slapping his sides nervously. His Decanus was still unconscious on his cot, a blood pack slapped on his remaining arm, the upper part of his body wrapped in bloody shirt to keep the stub of arm still. Centurion Aurelius had asked the recruit to watch over the blond while he went to look for Attila. Leo was outside taking a watch in case Attila came back or someone approached.

Caius couldn't stand still, twitching and fumbling anxiously, pacing back and forth inside the cramped tent. It felt like they were gone forever, maybe the sun was already rising outside ? Maybe they got lost ? Maybe they got killed ? He whimpered miserably when he started scratching himself violently, leaving behind bright red scrapes on the skin of his arm, stopping abruptly, focusing until it stopped.

He didn't know why Attila left, running away in the night without a word. Maybe he was kidnapped ? Or maybe he decided he didn't want to stay with the lot of them... The latest scared Caius more than anything else. Attila was his friend, innit ? He wouldn't leave without telling him, innit ? Attila mattered a lot to him, he wouldn't leave him alone, innit ?

Caius started scratching again, aiming for the neck this time, stopping again in his track to oust it away, he didn't want his ticks to start acting up again, not after the troubles it got them into earlier. Not after nearly getting them killed. He could feel his skin give away under the vicious attack of his nails. The recruit couldn't focus on anything else but Attila being missing. About his friend's distress when he tried to shield him from Aurelius. Attila tried to protect him from a fucking pissed off Centurion, then the Couriers. And now he was gone. Leaving without telling him in the middle of the night.

The big Courier was still inside the tent, laying peacefully on his cot, eyes riveted to the agitated
recruit, silent but showing no aggression. The man was frightening regardless, adding up to his intense stress. The man was a Decanus after all, an ex-Decanus but a Decanus still, and one promising enough to be noticed by Centurion Aurelius and be remembered after all this time.

Caius took a quick febrile peek at Domitius, immediately looking away when he met the amber stare, still scratching his neck restlessly.

"Calm down, kid. I'm not attacking you." Simply stated the Courier grabbing his cowboy hat on the ground and pushing it over his eyes as an silent amends.

"S-Sorry, didn' mean to annoy ya." Mumbled Caius turning away, focusing on Dead Sea instead, but the disturbing pallor of the Decanus didn't comfort him the slightest.

"You're not. I'm scaring you." Added Domitius tranquilly. Caius nodded, still not trying to face the giant. How could a freak like this man look so chill? Hours ago he single handily slaughtered the fuckin Legate and now he was just laying down with a lacerated leg like nothing happened. How was he not worried about people trying to strike back? How did he even escaped from the Legion? Caius couldn't remember clearly what the Courier said about his past, busy as he was with his ticks. Like his actual scratching, he hissed trying to contain it before it exploded again.

"What troubles you, kid?"

Caius yapped, blurting a curse loudly as he turned to face Domitius.

"Bless you?" Tried Domitius, pushing his hat away from his eyes, slightly confused by the recruit's behaviour.

"What?"

"It's kinda like sneezing, right? Dust told me the yelling earlier was not deliberate, so, bless you?" Explained the Courier clumsily. A man of many words.

"Uh... Thanks?" Responed Caius awkwardly, not expecting a polite reply to his swearing. The two men stared at each other silently, not knowing what to say or do next. The both of them at the loss of words for very different reasons. "Uh...Sir? Mind if I ask ya a question?" Domitius raised an eyebrow, slightly taken aback by the request, nodding after a few seconds. "Why did ya leave
Domitius closed his eyes a moment, inhaling deeply. Of course the topic would come up sooner or later. "I hated it."

"What?"

"I hated it. The Legion. The life there. What they call 'Justice'. I hated it." Clarified the Courier pushing his hat back on his nose. Caius stood here, not saying a single thing, the scratching had stopped but the curiosity remained. Domitius sighed again, pushing the hat back again, revealing once again his golden irises.

"Ask your question, kid."

"Ya were a Decanus, innit? How did ya become a Decanus if ya didn' like it there?" Domitius sighed again, pulling his hat on his eyes a few seconds before pushing it back again.

"I didn't rebel. Not openly. I tried to undermine the Legion plans instead. Used my rank to sabotage their operations." Added Domitius, it was a long time since he was reminded of his past, his eyes sparkled with a strange glow of nostalgia and regret. Caius felt oddly motivated by the patient answers, it wasn't every day that someone took him seriously, especially after a tick attack. He sat near the Courier's cot, the big man genuinely surprised by the recruit's bold behaviour. It wasn't every day that a small chitchat made someone behave in such a friendly way towards him.

*I mean, people are smart enough not to pet a Deathclaw, even a sleeping one,* had once said Dusty about the instinctive fear Domitius seemed to trigger around strangers.

"What did ya do?" Domitius huffed, amused, apparently the recruit was made of the same wood as Dusty, not caring about petting sleepy Deathclaws.

"I did plenty of things. But I got caught for smuggling slaves out."

"Ya smuggled slaves? Like, freein' them?" Asked Caius, eyes shining with enthusiasm, like a child being told his favourite story, Domitius found it quite endearing, but also felt a pang of bitterness and sorrow remembering how many children like him ended up crushed under the Legion's reign, how the recruit, jumping in anticipation, along with his two other brothers-in-arms,
would likely be torn apart by his own peers should he return to the Legion. The familiar crawling of anger seeped through his veins. He silenced it with a pill before answering.

"Yes. Slavery was the thing I despised the most. That's how I started my mutiny."

"How did ya do ? You'll tell me, innit ?"

Domitius smiled peacefully, at least this one was still mostly unscarred. Domitius brushed his beard pensively, trying to find a good story to tell the dreamy child when Dusty and Aurelius barged inside, Attila trembling on the Centurion's back.

"Recruit ! Come help us !" Barked Aurelius as Caius scrambled clumsily on the ground trying to get up.

Attila was here ! He didn't run away ! He came back ! He-

He was wounded.

Dirt all over his face and armour.

He had a knife planted inside his shaking hand.

And his calf was bleeding a lot.

"Recruit ! Don't stand here ! Help the healer ! Now !" Roared Aurelius once again, bringing Caius back on Earth.

The recruit left Domitius' side and jumped at Dusty's while Aurelius crashed by Dead Sea's cot with a deep sigh.

"Come here, child. Could you remove his boot and rinse and clean his leg wound while I handle the knife ?" Chirped the ginger handing Caius a bottle of medical alcohol with a detached smile. Caius nodded hurriedly fumbling with Attila's laces, struggling to undo the tight nodes of the
Dusty got her kit ready and cleaned the blade a bit before pulling it out of the hand swiftly making Attila cry out. The scout tried to yank his hand away but the ginger's grip on his wrist was too tight to escape. He was tired of having his hand trapped. Dusty cleaned the bleeding calmly, totally indifferent to Attila trying to jerk his hand back because of the sting of the alcohol. She hadn't even started sewing it shut yet.

Caius finally managed to get rid of the laces, pulling off the boot, careful not to hurt Attila more than he already was, still earning a pained whimper when he pressed his palm against the gaping wound. Or maybe it was Dusty's cleaning.

"Sorry, mate." Mumbled Caius opening the antiseptic bottle and emptying it on the wound. Attila instinctively kicked his friend, weeping an apology between his clenched teeth. Dusty let go of his hand to get her sewing kit ready. The scout was not looking forward getting sutures without any anaesthesia but he wasn't exactly given a choice. "You ok, Tilly?"

"Yeah..." Sobbed Attila weakly. "I just got caught like an idiot."

"What ya mean?"

"I went to check the perimeter and I got ambushed by NCR troopers... and a Ranger." Caius' mouth was gaping in terror. Attila went all alone to make sure they were safe. He didn't run away. He tried to protect them and faced a NCR Ranger. Faced a NCR Ranger and came back alive. How brave he was. The horror slowly turned into awe as Attila reluctantly gave his hand back to Dusty, ready to get his stitches. Gritting his teeth courageously as the ginger plunged the needle under his skin repeatedly, shutting the wound on the back of his hand quickly before turning her attention to the palm.

"You're so tough, dude..." Attila didn't hear, too focused on the pain to notice the other recruit's whisper. Dusty finished sewing as fast as she started.

"Alright, can you step back a little, kiddo? I need room to remove the bullet." Warned Dusty putting her kit back on the crate by the small cot. Caius scrambled back, staying close to Attila's cot as Dusty helped the scout to lie on his stomach so she could have a better access to the wound. Caius decided to stay with his friend, trying his best to soothe his pain while Dusty took care of the wound.
Caius looked again at Attila's cot. The scout was still laying on his belly, both his hand and calf wrapped in thick bandages, sound asleep, exhausted after his encounter with the NCR and getting stitches. He had the right to be after all. He faced a fuckin RANGER. Caius shifted on his cot, everyone was nested up in the tent, trying to rest for the night. All but Dusty taking the watch outside. Domitius was snoring softly on his cot, and he should after the fight, Aurelius was laying next to Dead Sea's cot on a bedroll on the ground, shielding the Decanus from any kind of menace that could come to them, and beside Caius laid Attila and Leo. Caius turned towards the latter, the third recruit was laying still on his back. Eyes closed. Breathing regular. But absolutely not asleep. And Caius knew it.

"Oi, mate. You awake ?" Whispered the recruit excitedly, trying to keep it low enough to let the others sleep peacefully.

"I am." Replied Leo flatly, hoping his tone would make it clear he wished to sleep. Unsuccessfully.

"What ya think's gonna happen after ?" Blurted Caius toying with the hem of the blanket. Leo sighed quietly, pretty much like Domitius did before, working on his answer.

"I don't know. I don't think we can go back to the Legion after running away from the battlefield. And I don't think the NCR will leave us alone either." Explained Leo warily.

"What ya mean ?" Insisted Caius rolling on his stomach. Leo sighed again. Louder. Was silence too much for asking ?

"Think about it, Caius. The Couriers won the Dam for the NCR. Do you remember what they did to Decanus Dead Sea ? What do you think will happen to us ? Maybe we're alive just because they need prisoners." Leo immediately regretted saying that upon saying the look of pure horror on the young recruit. "I mean ! I'm probably wrong ! They wouldn't have saved Attila from the NCR ranger if they wanted us as prisoners, right ?"

"Maybe..." Mumbled Caius under his breath. They did save them after all. They even healed them and fed them. Plus he liked Domitius. The giant didn't mock him about his ticks, he even said 'bless you'. He wouldn't hand him to the NCR, innit ? "Do you think they will give us to the NCR ? I don' wanna be sent in a NCR prison..."
"I don't know. That wouldn't make any sense. They fought some NCR troopers to protect Attila. And they could just let us go and get killed somewhere else. I don't know. Maybe they will grant us shelter. But with the NCR crawling everywhere I don't think we'll stay incognito very long." Once again Leo wished he could wash his tongue when Caius hid under the cover, whimpering softly.

"I don't wanna go... I don't wanna get hurt... They will hurt all of us... like they did with Decanus Dead Sea... I don't wanna go." Whined Caius hidden under the blankets. His ticks were leaving him alone but a crippling feeling of dread filled his chest instead. Leo awkwardly tried to pat the bunch of shaking blankets, feeling horribly guilty about being the one to cause Caius such intense distress.

"Hey, listen, maybe we can go somewhere else ? Out of NCR territory ? There must be other places, right ? Like... the places the Legion has not settled in yet ? Maybe there's some tribals that would take us in ? Maybe the Couriers know some place safe from their travels ? And we're all together, it's not a bad thing, right ?" Offered Leo sheepishly, patting the roll of blankets until the sobs softened. The brunette recruit's head popped from under the covers, Leo regretted his nasty tongue once again when he noticed how swollen his eyes were.

"The NCR won' get us ?" Mumbled Caius, mortified by the NCR like he was some sort of Bogeyman that would barge out of the shadows. Leo himself couldn't help but feeling frightened to the prospect of waking up in front of the red glow of a ranger's helmet, a sharp blade pressing against the thin skin of his neck.

"Of course not." Lied Leo with a forced smile, still patting the bundle of covers nervously. "And we have Centurion Aurelius and Decanus Dead Sea watching over us. They will protect us from all harm." Continued Leo trying to convince himself as much as Caius. The other recruit seem to accept the story, offering a faint smile.

"Aye, we're safe here. We can all stay together, innit ?"

"Of course we will. Now let's get some rest, alright ?" Suggested Leo, relieved when Caius nodded enthusiastically and turned back to face Attila once again.

Leo settled back on the cot, making himself comfortable once more. Nothing to bother him anymore but the soft snores in the tent, and enjoying every single one of them. Quickly losing his plenitude when he heard Caius shift again towards him, he could almost HEAR the smile on the brunette's lips.
"What. Is. It ?" Hissed Leo between his clenched teeth.

"When we will all have our big house can I have a dog ?"

"Go. To. Sleep."

Chapter End Notes

If you spot any mistake or typo feel free to notify me so I can correct it. I would also love to have your opinion on the story so feel free to review/comment
Thank you all for reading so far and thank you so much for all the kudos :) 

If you're looking for me and Dhole our Tumblr usernames are 'truenekosama' (for me) and 'Decani' (for Dhole)
Chapter Summary

Dead Sea's wounds seem worse than expected and Dusty can't put her finger on the reason.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Dusty brushed the sutures on the back of the scout's leg. She woke up everyone with home made coffee and breakfast food, not good considering their cringy expression when they tried to take a bite. That was the reason why Domitius always cooked.

Now she was doing her checks while Leo and Caius took watch outside.

The cut on the child's spotted leg was clean, if the boy healed nicely she could remove the stitches in a week or so. She cleaned the wound with a bit of alcohol, making the child hiss once again at the sting before she handled the calf gently to put new bandages on. The hole in the boy's hand was looking the same, neat and clean. It would leave a funny scar but he shouldn't lose his motor abilities.

"Are you sure I will be fine ? It's hard to move my fingers." Insisted Attila trying to close his hand stiffly.

"Yes, yes. It's difficult because It's swollen, which is perfectly normal after getting stabbed, but your tendons aren't severed, so it will be fine. Here take this lollipop." Offered Dusty pulling the candy out of her pocket and handing it to the very confused legionary.

"Uh... thanks, ma'am..." Mumbled Attila looking at the treat with concern. He couldn't really accept it, could he ? He wanted it, it's been years since his last candy, but could he really take treats from the Courier ? He decided to save it for later.

"Good ! Try to stay in bed for a few days so you don't make the sutures snap like Domi's, alright ?"
Domitius huffed from his cot, making the ginger chuckle amusingly. She then trotted towards the Centurion and the Decanus, the latter still unconscious. Dusty crashed near the cot by the Centurion's side. The man barely acknowledged her presence, focused on his lover, motionless on his chair.

The ginger checked the Centurion discreetly. The man was still in shock, which was understandable. Dusty was still surprised that the Legion boy accepted to stay with them. Without being restrained. Dusty didn't remember Domitius ever mentioning a legionary worth sparing. He did talk about his Centurion but never naming him. She was still wary about the lot of Legion louts frolicking around but at least no one was trying to slap a slave collar on her.

She directed her attention on the Decanus laying down instead. The man didn't look any better than yesterday. He should be awake by now, but instead his eyes were closed, his breathing laboured, and his pulse fast. Something was wrong, she checked the amputated limb, the nub was not infected, no visible necrosis, the other cuts were clean too. Odd. A foul smell floated around, like alcohol, not the one she used to clean wounds.

She sniffed around, trying to find its origin. The smell of antiseptic drowned the foreign one, it didn't come from the wounds, not his chest, not his hand, not his-

"What are you doing, profligate ?" Hissed the Centurion grabbing the back of her shirt menacingly.

"I'm trying to heal your cutie pie, big boy," noted Dusty with a calm smile. "I think you can see something is wrong, don't you ?" The Centurion seemed shocked, taking a frightened look at his lover, still clenching the collar of her shirt. Of course he could see the pallor of the blond, the heavy sweating, the irregular rising of his chest, of course something was wrong. But wasn't this related to his injuries ?

The Centurion aimed his attention back at the ginger, Dusty hanging serenely like a ragdoll. Smiling when Dead Sea was agonising. "Why aren't you healing him, then ?" Growled Aurelius pulling the small healer up to his eye level like she weighted nothing.

"I was trying to when you pulled me, big boy," she retorted, squinting her almond-shaped eyes at him like a fox. "And I can't do it if you don't put me down..." she paused a second, tilting her head on the side. "Also I think Domi doesn't like you shaking me around."

Aurelius opened his mouth to speak but stopped when a cold blade slipped under his jaw, pressing it's sharp edge onto his skin. "Let. Them. Go."
Aurelius looked behind, the giant was looming over him, Aurelius knew his leg was wounded, giving him an important advantage in hand to hand combat. But he also knew the blade would easily slash his throat in a blink if he pushed his luck too far. He remembered how skilled the man was with his machete. The Centurion carefully lowered the ginger back on her spot. Keeping his hands in sight all the while.

"Thanks, Domi." Purred the ginger sniffing the Decanus again. "You can leave him now, he won't bother me while I work anymore, right big boy ?"

"I said I would do everything you want if you save him, and I will."

Domitius judged him hardly, the pain in his leg was nearly unbearable but he didn't care as long as it meant his friend stayed safe. He sighed and accepted to release the Centurion. Aurelius returned calmly to his spot by Dead Sea's side, glaring daggers at the mortified scout who didn't warned him, the boy flattened on his cot. The ginger was bent over the blond, sniffing everything, opting to check everything when she couldn't find where the smell was from, she checked between the Decanus' fingers and toes, under his nails, behind his ears and-

Dusty froze, sniffing again, opening the blond's mouth, nose scrunching up when the heavy smell of acetone filled the air.

"Shit. Hey, big boy, when was the last time your cutie pie ate ?" The Decanus was starving, the smell confirmed it. At least twenty-four hours without chewing on something.

"We were all given food before the Battle of the Hoover Dam, I ate with Dead. Less than a day ago." It didn't fit, he couldn't smell that way if he ate that recently.

"Are you sure, big boy ? Did he threw up ? His glycaemia is exploding right now, he-"

"Glycaemia ? This has something to do with his diabetes ?" Dusty's eyes widen, he didn't right ?

"His what ?" She strangled rubbing her ears to make sure she didn't hear it wrong.

"His diabetes. He has diabetes. He has to take injections of... Insular every once in a while."
Explained the Centurion feeling suddenly very flustered, even more when he noticed both Domitius and Attila both hiding their faces in their palms in embarrassment. "I... should have told you?"

Dusty gave him a grating smile and went to dig through her doctor's bag, pulling a syringe swiftly. "Yes, big boy. Diabetes is a VERY dangerous disease," she explained in a tone strangely aggressive despite its chanting sound. "He could have died without me knowing why. With the time he spent without his medicine he may lose his sight, or get infection in his limbs and plenty of other charming little things." Dusty regretted her harsh words when she saw the look of utter distress and confusion on the man's face, a little.

Legion's ignorance was impressive. Diabetes was a well known disease, every Follower, even the ones working in non-medical domains, was even trained to recognise the signs, it wouldn't take a smart man to know at least a bit about it. Plus the blond had a treatment for it so it was known, indeed. And the two were fucking, right? Why didn't he know about it? She plunged the needle in the blond's arm, injecting the liquid inside. It should help him wake up soon.

She fumbled with her candy pouch, pulling a piece of caramel out, removing the plastic around if.

Aurelius' eyes were riveted on his lover, gasping audibly when the blond finally stirred, eyes opening groggily. Dusty pressed the piece of candy against the Dead Sea's lips. The Decanus mumbled something incoherent allowing the sweet treat to be shoved between his teeth. Aurelius was kneeling near his lover, waiting for Dead Sea to fully wake up.

Dusty smiled calmly. She needed to stay a few minutes to make sure he would be alright but the Decanus seemed fine.

Dusty trotted out of the tent, a satisfied smile on her face. The blond was still confused and slightly delirious when she left, but at least he was waking up just fine. A good meal later would do the trick. She made her way towards the campfire, both Caius and Leo were sitting around. The two children chatting quietly, oblivious to her presence. She couldn't resist sneaking up on them, crouching slightly as she made her way over them until she could get bits of their discussion.

"ut they real nice, mate." Mumbled Caius sadly toying with the candy Dusty gave him earlier, would any of the Legion kids eat her damn candy? They weren't poisoned.

"Yeah, but maybe they'll get tired of hiding us from the NCR. They will be everywhere in the Mojave soon enough, we can't stay all of our lives holed up in a cave of something." Countered
Leo flatly, the young recruit sounded tired, *he probably didn’t sleep well*, thought Dusty as she sat behind the two children.

"Yesterday you said they wouldn’! Yesterday you said we would make it out! If we can’ do anythin’ then... If we always end up caught by NCR then..." The recruit started sobbing.

"Oh no! Don't cry, child!" Blurted Dusty patting his back, scaring the shit out of the two recruits. Oops. "Uh? Sorry?"

"You were spying on us!" Barked Leo jumping on his feet, pointing at the ginger accusingly.

"I was not!" Lied Dusty, still offended by the accusation. "I was just checking up on you, children."

"I'm not a child." Pouted Leo childishly in a very childlike manner, making Dusty grin from ear to ear. Child.

"Sure, whatever you say, big boy," purred Dusty, earning an annoyed groan from Leo. "But may I ask why were the two of you talking about the NCR?" Caius and Leo both looked down guiltily, not saying a single thing. "What is it, children? What are you scared of?"

"Leo said the NCR will get us..." Mumbled Caius as Leo glared daggers at him for snitching.

"Why would the NCR get you if you're not going in their territory?"

"But we ARE in NCR territory, aren't we?" Intervened Leo scratching absently the scar on his forehead.

"Are we, now? I wasn't aware of it."

"But... You won the battle of the Hoover Dam... That makes the Mojave NCR territory." Retorted Leo.
Dusty looked at the child with wide eyes like an owl before bursting into laughter, holding her ribs until the cackle stopped. She pushed her tears away while the two recruits looked at her in utter terror and confusion, like she was about to blow up or something.

"Heeheehee... Listen, kiddos... heehee... Domi and I didn't win this Battle just to hand the Mojave to the NCR, ok ? We kicked them out too. Mojave is free of both Legion and NCR." Wheezed Dusty brushing her sore sides.

"They gon' ? Ain't comin' back either ?" Asked Caius with a huge smile on his lips.

"Wait a minute ! If they are gone how did they attack Attila ?" Barked Leo barring the way between the Courier and his friend, trying to puff himself up in front of the tiny ginger who seemed absolutely unimpressed by his demonstration but more concerned about the confusion and distress visible in Caius' eyes.

"Because they are bitter, child. We won the fight fair and square and the NCR does not appreciate being told what to do and also-" said Dusty waving her finger around. "don't you think if the Legion was in the same situation they wouldn't try to get their revenge on whatever they could find ? I'd actually be surprised if the ones scattered around the Mojave didn't."

Leo tried to retort but couldn't find a thing to say, shutting up his mouth instead, defeated and ready to admit it when Caius popped above his shoulder.

"But how did ya beat up the NCR ? Decanus Dead Sea says they are monsters, he always warn us 'bout Rangers and there were plenty of Rangers at the Dam."

"To tell the truth, we made them back down all by themselves. Domi and I only had to fight the Legion then we pulled out our Joker to get rid of the NCR. Two birds one stone, you see ?" She said imitating a throwing motion. The two recruits looked at each others, lost, that couldn't be real, right ? The NCR was the Legion's worst enemy, terrible enough to stop the all-powerful Caesar's Legion. They were also the ones who nearly killed Decanus Dead Sea. What was fearsome enough to scare them off ? What did the Couriers had behind their backs to vanquish the two most powerful armies of the Mojave ?

"You ok, kids ? Looks like you saw the big bad wolf." Jested Dusty patting Leo's shoulder affectionately. The recruit didn't know what to make of it, just shifting awkwardly, fearing the ginger could turn him into dust in a blink. "Well, if Rangers are what's haunting your nightmares know that Domi and I will make sure they stay away. Just try not to go on a walk in full Legion gear, all alone, in the middle of the night, children."
The two recruit looked at each others, hardly believing the ginger but too scared to try to question her yet.

Chapter End Notes

This fic is a collab with Dhole, you can find them on tumblr with the username 'Dholes' and you can find me with the username 'truenekosama'

Please review so I can improve myself and the story, thanks for all the kudos :)
Bona valetudo melior est quam maximæ divitiae

Chapter Summary

Dead Sea finally wakes up from his slumber and realisation hits him hard

Chapter Notes

A chapter a bit shorter than usual I'll update the chapter 7 sooner

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Everything was blurry. Everything was cold. Senseless. The ground under him felt like water, and the sweet feeling invading his mouth was both welcomed and nauseating. The distant sound of waves crashing against his ear, or the gust of the wind. He could hear the sound but not feel the breeze, maybe it was just blood rushing urgently through his veins.

What he was certain of is that he was not on the Battlefield anymore. Shame. He wished he was. At least he wouldn't have to live with the burden of losing the Battle of the Hoover Dam. But instead here he was, head spinning like mad.

He blinked blindly, trying to focus on his surroundings, he was inside a tent, he could tell that much by the lack of sunlight and greyish tint around him. The cot felt strange, not the usual hardness of the usual Legion's cots. Maybe stolen NCR gear?

Regardless, he felt like shit. His whole body burnt, lightening bolts biting his left flank cruelly. The Decanus hissed, pressing his eyes shut, squirming painfully, with consciousness pain came back flooding all his senses. The pain was so intense he felt like someone immersed him into cold water, the damp feeling of sweat soaking the covers didn't help. His shoulder was the worse, like someone was actively trying to cut it off with a rusty saw, an electric sizzle viciously prickling through his muscle and bone like someone was slashing through his flesh and pulling on it made him growl.

He tried to press his right hand against the excruciating spot only to have his fingers snatched into mid-air. Dead Sea tried to force his eyes open, taking a good look at the one holding his hand.

The first thing he saw was a crimson red blur. Legion. Good. After a few seconds trying to focused he could see the tanned skin, pick up a fuzzy voice. He tried to speak but a pained croak was all
that escaped from his throat. Another hand stroke his forehead, pushing his hair away from his damp skin with a familiar fondness. A display of affection Dead Sea would only tolerate with one man.

"Aurelius."

"Dead Sea ! Dead Sea, I'm here ! I'm with you... I'll keep you safe, I promise..."

The Centurion's voice was trembling, vulnerable, nearly begging. It was a sight Dead Sea had never witnessed and never expected to see. The big man kept blabbering, the Decanus noticed his lover wasn't wearing his armour, only his toga, dirt clinging to it like he slept on the floor by his bed. Aurelius couldn't stop talking, one hand massaging his wrist lovingly while brushing his dirty locks reverently. Dead Sea could now see the shine of tears welling up his eyes, did he ever see Aurelius cry ? He did not want to see this. He didn't want to feel this pang in his chest eclipsing the tearing pain clawing at his shoulder. The strange, warm, but melancholic emotion embracing his body.

"Reily... I'll be fine. I just need to eat, ok ?" Heaved the blond laboriously offering a weak smile. The Centurion nodded, Aurelius needed to tone it down if he didn't want potential slaves or recruits to see him wiping tears away from his face.

"What do you need, Dead ? Just tell me and I'll find it for you." Hiccuped the bigger man kissing his right hand affectuously. The Centurion's behaviour was strange, too devoted to be natural. Maybe the shock of losing the battle.

"Something to eat, anything... and tell the healer to put more healing powder on my shoulder. The arm is just fine but my shoulder hurts like mad..." The Centurion froze, pure fright on his features. "Aurelius ? Aurelius, what's wrong ?"

"Dead... Your... Your arm it's... They couldn't... She had to..."

Dead Sea raised an eyebrow, confused. What was he talking about ? He remembered taking a bad blow but his arm didn't hurt that much right now. Actually besides his shoulder he couldn't feel his arm. He couldn't feel anything at all... his blood ran cold, even the pain seemed to withdraw, like it knew what was coming next. Waiting patiently for the Decanus to turn his head so it could plunge again its claws under his skin when he realised what had happened.
The blond swallowed, Aurelius had started sobbing again, his hand holding the Decanus' wrist so hard the blond would've sworn he would get some bruises later. Dead Sea breathed out shakily, turning his head towards his left arm.

Or what was left of it.

There was nothing but a little stub, hanging stupidly out of his thorax.

Dead Sea screamed, jumping out of the bed, crashing on his ass, scrambling in the dirt like he was trying to run away from the grotesque vision. Aurelius tried to hold him but the sheer terror pushed the blond to struggle against the embrace, only managing to make the Centurion's heart ache more and more at the sight of the proud fighter now scared of his own arm, thrashing and crying out on the ground.

Aurelius restrained him reluctantly, pulling him between his large arms, mumbling soothing nonsense against the shell of his lover's ear.

Dead Sea sobbed pitifully, eyes riveted on his missing limb. Freezing dread crawled inside his veins, cruelly tearing away the remaining pieces of sanity from the Decanus.

He couldn't serve Caesar's will with an arm missing. He would be kicked out of the Legion. Maybe degraded to a slave's rank. A lesser man. Despite all of his achievements he would lose the Legion's favour. He would not be able to glorify Caesar's legacy. He didn't want such a half life. He didn't want such a miserable existence. He should have died. He should have died on the battlefield. He should have died instead of being here, held tight between his lover's arms.

He should have died.

"Why ?"

Aurelius paused his murmur, his hand motionless in Dead Sea's golden locks.

"Why didn't you let me die ?!" Wailed Dead Sea, pushing Aurelius away, planting his crying eyes in Aurelius'. "Why didn't you let me die on the battlefield ?! I can't serve the Legion without my arm ! What will happen to me right now ?! I can't... I can't... that's all I know... don't let me become a slave... I'd rather die by your own hand..." Whimpered the Decanus, gripping the front of the
Centurion's toga weakly with his remaining hand, both pleading and furious, strange mix of desolation born from the mourning of his lost arm and the surge of adrenalin.

"We're not going back." Blurted Aurelius.

"What ?"

"We're not going back to the Legion." Repeated the Centurion firmly.

Dead Sea looked up, in confusion and disbelief. What was he talking about ? Weren't they in a Legion's camp ? Where were they, then ?

"Y'all fine in there, kiddos ?" Barked Dusty trotting inside the tent jovially.

Dead Sea's eyes widened, the Courier was here, the one that costed him his very arm. The Decanus got instantly got blinded by rage, ears filled with blood, legs bolting up towards up in a swift leap... only to crash back down, pinned down by pain and hypoglycaemia.

"Yeah, try not to run around for now. You don't want your stitches to snap, I'm running out of thread with you, children." Noted Dusty as Aurelius scrambled to put the Decanus back on his cot.

The blond looked around him, the other Courier, the giant one was chilling calmly on his bed, hat pushed down his face, completely ignoring the scene happening a few feet away. Why was he so peaceful ? Why wasn't he on edge when Aurelius was here, when Attila was here ? The scout was laying down on his stomach, head hidden under a pillow, his spotted arms still showing, a bandage wrapped around his hand. Coward. Coward, why was he not fighting the Couriers ? Why was he not running to get help like he did before ? Why wasn't Aurelius worried about the two Couriers ? Why wasn't he fighting them ?

"You..." Hissed the blond at the two men. "YOU'RE BOTH TRAITORS ! YOU DISHONOUR THE LEGION ! YOU PLOT AGAINST THE LEGION ! AURELIUS-" roared the Decanus using his feeble strength to hit the Centurion's chest. "HOW DARE YOU ?! HOW DARE YOU ALLY WITH THE ENEMY ?! WHY DIDN'T YOU LET ME DIE ?! WHY DID YOU LET ME LIVE THROUGH THAT ?! WHY DON'T YOU JUST KILL ME ALREADY ?! WHY-"
"I CAN'T LOSE YOU!" Boomed Aurelius grabbing Dead Sea's shoulders. He accidentally plunged his fingers in the new scars making the blond howl in agony. The Centurion dropped him, the Decanus crashing on his cot, writhing, suffering madly, grabbing the stub searing painfully. Aurelius watched him. Terrified. Dead Sea was broken in front of him. And it was his fault. He took this decision. He just wanted to save him. He only wanted him safe and sound. And for that he drove them out of the Battlefield, made them traitors, and had his beloved's arm cut off by their biggest enemies.

Despair slowly overridden the sense of pain in the blond's mind, he lost it all, he was done for, the loss of his arm minor compared to the shame to be at his enemies' mercy.

The Centurion fell onto his knees, tears streaming out of his eyes, whimpering helplessly, pressing his forehead on the edge of the cot.

Both Dusty and Domitius stared, stunned as the two men cried together. Attila was hiding his own tears of fear under the pillow. How much he craved to run away.

"I can't lose you... I can't... I'm not... I won't survive it..." Whispered the Centurion reaching shyly for the crying Decanus, barely brushing the clenching fingers. The blond opened his drowned eyes but the Centurion was looking down, not strong enough to bear the outcome of his response. "I can't live... without you... if you hate me... that's fine... if you leave me... that's fine... if you want to kill me... do it... but I can't... live in a world... where you're dead... I can't... I can't... please... let me... let me save you..."

Dead Sea sniffed irregularly, pushing the hand hoovering over him weakly. Aurelius cried out, it felt like being stabbed, the maddening spiral of his heartache increasing when he felt Dead Sea moving up on his cot. Hopefully Dead Sea would choose to kill him now, it would spare him the chore of doing it himself later.

His heart stopped when he felt a hand slipping under his jaw, the Centurion barred his throat, eyes closed, he didn't deserve to look at him one last time. He didn't deserve to have such a beautiful sight as his last vision. He was ready to accept his judgement. But Dead Sea didn't wrapped his fingers around his windpipe. Instead the Decanus kissed him so softly Aurelius wondered if he dreamed it.

"Don't ever... ever speak of dying again." Rasped the blond sorely. Aurelius opened his eyes warily, breath taken away by the view. Dead Sea was still crying, eyes swollen, hair dishevelled from all the running around, cheeks insanely pale from the lack of sugar in his blood, but he was still the most gorgeous being to ever exist in his eyes. How much he loved him. How much he give to keep him happy. He would give up on everything to keep him safe. He already did.
"You hear me, Aurelius? I won't allow you to die on me. Not now. Not ever. don't ever speak of dying again, you hear." The Centurion sobbed but nodded all the same, he looked so vulnerable, accepting everything coming from Dead Sea's hands, he would let him kill him without even putting up a fight.

"I love you, Aurelius. Don't ever forget that."

Chapter End Notes

This story is a collaboration with Dhole, you can find them on tumblr with the username Dholes and you can find me with the username Truenekosama
Please review and comment so I can improve, thank you for reading
Dead Sea has to rest for a while and he doesn't appreciate the company.

Chapter Notes

The second part contains a torture and crucifixion description, be careful if this makes you uncomfortable.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Dead Sea brooded.

He has been brooding for the past three days.

Aurelius tried to soothe him all the while but the situation angered the Decanus too much. And the fact he needed help to take a piss didn't really helped improve his mood.

The Legion lost the Dam, that much he understood during the fight. But then the Couriers explained how they also kicked out the NCR. With robots. Now New Vegas belonged to no one. But it was not what annoyed the blond the most. What made him furious was how easily the two of them, single-handily pushed back the two biggest armies of the Wasteland.

The two of them.

All alone.

The NCR never figured how to keep anyone away from their territory.

The Legion never figured it out either.

But they did. A crazy ginger doctor with an obsession for bombs and a taciturn giant.
The black man has been shoving pills between his teeth every once in a while. Probably painkillers for his leg. Weak. He was Legion, he should have been able to handle the pain of such a wound with dignity. Like Dead Sea was. The man truly became like one of the profligates, drugging himself like half of a man. The ex-legionary exasperated the blond madly. What bugged him the most was the contrast between the lying man's attitude and the man he remembered Aurelius talk about.

The Decanus Domitius was known to be a blood thirsty man, restless, always enraged, unkillable like the Burned man and savage like the Legate Lanius. Every one heard about his prowess, every one expected him to be called by the praetorian guard to join their numbers, eventually take over Lucius' throne, every one wanted to see him become the biggest asset of the Legion.

Which made his betrayal even more cruel to the morale.

Not only the man was found guilty of undermining many Legion operations and actively assassinating elite soldiers, he also smuggled hundreds of slaves, including a large amount of children and breeders, out of Legion territory costing huge toll on their numbers.

He remembered how wounded Aurelius was when he asked about the fabled warrior. How pained he was when he explained how the man and his whole treacherous team was whipped to death, hoping to get some information on the location of the runaways, but their leader managed to survive the whole ordeal. How he was crucified among his soldiers' corpses. The Centurion had admitted he left before the lashing was even finished, fully knowing that a little flogging wouldn't break the man. Dead Sea didn't dare ask why, but he could see in the distress creeping up the bigger man's eyes and the pinch of his lips how disappointed he was.

Domitius was supposed to be set on fire after being pulled up on the cross. but apparently the latest has not been done. Like Burned Man, the Decanus seemed to be fireproof. And also fiercely opposed to Legion's ideals.

And yet...

The man decided he should spare his life. Not only his life but also Aurelius' the one that sentenced him to the cross, along with unknown recruits he knew nothing about. This was so far from the picture he was depicted of the man. Decanus Domitius worked solo, didn't know mercy, never let his guard down. Courier Domitius travelled with Dusty, spared their lives and offered them shelter, dozing off calmly while surrounded by five legionary louts.
How was he so relaxed he wouldn't even bother raising an eyebrow whenever someone stumbled inside the tent. He did not care about the clumsy recruits taking watches, Attila's leg healed enough for him to limp outside for his turn, or Aurelius hunting every once in a while or even Dusty coming to check on the lot of them, also giving the blond his insulin all while royally ignoring his complains about the food or some imaginary fool odour in the air.

For now the two Decani were left alone in the tent, Aurelius was hunting and scavenging for some medicine with the ginger Courier, and the three recruits were guarding their camp outside. The kids didn't have much to fear, so far only a half-starved Nightstalker made its way to their camp.

It was the first time since he regain consciousness that he was left alone with the man.

"Are you really Decanus Domitius ?"

"No." Answered flatly the laying man, not even pushing his hat off his face.

"Why do you pretend you are him, then ? Don't you think Aurelius will figure it out ?" Growled the blond angrily. He was right, every thing about this man was a fraud. Every thing about Decanus Domitius and even his copycat was a fraud.

"I'm not pretending."

"You are ! If you are not Decanus Domitius then you are an shameful liar." Hissed Dead Sea propping himself up to stare down at the giant. He suspected it would be the only occasion he would have to look down a man that was around Aurelius' height.

Domitius pushed his hat off his face, planting his golden irises in the Decanus' blue eyes. Dead Sea felt a cold shiver trickle down his spine, this man may be a fraud but he surely was still terrifying. "I'm not a liar. And I am not Decanus Domitius anymore, I am my own man."

Dead Sea huffed. "Are you really that foolish ? You had everything in the Legion, you were destined to greatness. You would have been the best of us ! Instead you speak like a profligate."

"Then profligate I am."
"Are you really? Do you not wish to be greater than those lowlifes?" Insisted the blond, puzzled by the bigger man's attitude. Domitius sighed, swallowing one of his pills before pushing his hat back on his face. The blond called him but Domitius didn't even stir. "Hey! Are you listening?" No answer. He wanted to play it like that, fine.

Dead Sea laid back down on his cot, fulminating. He would not give in. He would not make the effort to call for his attention again. The traitor didn't deserve the effort anyway. He didn't deserved getting away with this either but insisting would be playing his game. Still.

The Legion was everything, born from the mind of the greatest man to ever roam Earth. The most deserving always got a reward and the lowest scums were whipped out, leaving only the best of them. Everyone had a chance under the Legion rule. Why would he try to ruin that? The Legion was the best thing to happen to the Wasteland and he couldn't stand a vile felon degrade that noble ideal.

"I don't wish to discuss it, stop staring at me." Mumbled Domitius under his hat. Fucking profligates.

"Fine. But will you at least tell me what you intend to do with us?" The ex-Decanus pushed his hat back once more, what an annoying quirk of his.

"Nothing. Dusty heals you. We go back to our business. You guys do whatever you want as long as you don't bother us." Simply explained the black man.

"Just like that? You'll let us go? Even the recruits?"

"Especially the kids."

"Why? Why would you even give us such a chance? Another of your foolish profligate concept?"

Domitius sighed even louder. He did not want to debate with someone so hostile to his way of thinking. "I do believe in second chances."

"Second chances? Don't be an idiot. Legion was my second chance." hissed the blond between his teeth.
"Second chance from what? You were a child when the Legion took you in." Noted Domitius flatly. "They rather took something from you than gave anything."

"YOU KNOW NOTHING ABOUT ME!" Roared Dead Sea pulling himself up on his cot, ignoring the blinding flash of pain crackling through his flank. "THE LEGION SAVED ME! THE LEGION GAVE ME MORE THAN I WAS EVER OFFERED!"

"Calm down, kid." Retorted the ex-legionary coldly, annoying, insulting, infuriating.

"Don't. Ever. Call me... A kid... Again." Spat Dead Sea. Domitius looked at him, studying the blond silently. There was something he didn't know. In his life within the Legion he had never met someone so indoctrinated by Caesar's propaganda. The Legion only brought misery to the ones swallowed by it. How could the blond not see it? "The Legion saved me. It saved plenty. Caesar is the best thing that happened to these lands and you destroyed his legacy."

"Caesar was a megalomaniac liar." Mocked Domitius choosing to ignore the other man's outburst. He wouldn't be the only one to believe in Legion's lies after all. It will pass with time. Or not.

"DON'T YOU DARE SPEAK ILL OF LORD CAESAR! HE DID WHAT NO OTHER MAN EVER DID! HE BROUGHT CIVILISATION IN THESE WICKED LANDS!" Roared Dead Sea jumping on his feet. The sight looked so odd to Domitius. The blond had nothing on him but the lower part of his toga, the left side of his torso was wrapped in a bloody sheet to keep the nub on his shoulder still. He looked out of place, not in the shape for anger but angry nonetheless.

"Your 'Caesar' did nothing but copy an ancient man all while playing God and fulfilling his disgusting fantasy of slavery and world domination." started Domitius in a cold dead tone. He was so fucking glad the man was seven feet under ground now. And he was even prouder to be responsible of this fact. On the other hand Dead Sea was fulminating even harder, the bubbling fury crawling inside his chest worsened by the apparent apathy of the soot-haired man.

"SILENCE PROFLIGATE! YOU KNOW NOTHING ABOUT THE MAN HE WAS! HE WAS THE TRUE SON OF MARS! HE SAVED ME! HE SAVED ALL OF US FROM SAVAGERY AND DEPRAVITY! DEGENERATES LIKE YOU SHOULD HAVE BEEN STRINGED UP A CROSS AT BIRTH!" The punch flew so fast in Dead Sea face the man barely had the time to blink before he was sent to fly back. Pain flooded through his entire body as his back slammed against the edge of the cot. He struggled to find his balance back without his left arm, managing to scramble back on his feet clumsily.
Domitius was up, staring down at the blond. Dead Sea realised how big the man was. All in muscles and fire. His eyes seemed to glow with a disturbing spark. Something off. Something wrong. Something... insane. The giant breathed heavily, his pants sounding like rasp growls, mouth hanging open like a dog's, sharp white teeth piercing out of his gums. The blond felt his stomach make a weird twist but refused to show any weakness, fear mixed up with his own wrath, he tried to square off, puff himself up but he knew he was no match in front of the titan that killed Lanius with his bare hands.

Dead Sea knew he somehow pushed the bar too far. That he made a mistake but where? He knew no man capable of turning from collected coolness to inhuman ire. He just did not looked like the same man. He looked like Decanus Domitius. The monster of a man everyone compared to a wild bull.

"The Legion is a land of dogs calling themselves humans, kid." Growled the man putting emphasis on the last word. "Your leader was nothing but a senile old man who abused the ignorance of others to turn them into obedient puppets."

"Lies! He raised us from ignorance! He gave us light and showed us the way to enlightenment! A knowledge those tribals scums could never have reached!" roared Dead Sea camping himself in front of the giant. Domitius laughed out loud, a menacing laugh full of smugness and spite.

"Those 'tribals scums' as you call them have more respect and decency for human life than any of you do."

Too much was too much. Dead Sea felt his own body light up in overwhelming wrath. He barely realised lashing out on the titan. Like it was a fight he could win. Luckily for him the weight of his body was too much for Domitius' wounded leg to hold and the titan fell with an agonising roar.

The victory was short, helped with both his arms instead of one, the ex-legionary was quick to send a paralysing punch in the blond's ribs while the smaller man tried to maul him with his remaining hand. The fight barely lasted a few seconds before strong hands pulled him off the infuriating giant. Domitius would have surely attacked him back again but Dusty jumped in front of him ending the quarrel right away.

The two of them were separated and the fight ended, leaving in the air a sour bitterness. Something unspoken floating between them. And Dead Sea intended to find out what it was.
"What happened, Domi? What did he say to make you lose your shit like that?" Inquired the ginger softly, busy with the stitches on the man's leg for the third time. If he kept snapping his sutures the wound would never heal correctly, the injured part already looked like a fleshy mess.

"'said I should've been put on a cross." Hissed Domitius, gritting his teeth as the needle plunged once again in his flesh.

"Shit. Kid needs to learn how to hold his tongue." Mumbled the ginger wrapping the dark leg in clean bandages. She remembered quite well when her partner's hatred for crucifixion or crosses in general started. They first met seven years ago, when she started to help him smuggle various 'items' out of Legion territory, using her Courier status to go in and out unwatched.

First it was orders brought to Domitius' team to prevent X or Y Legion action from succeeding. Then she found herself smuggling children out. Even later she helped adults, mostly women, escape the servitude of the Legion. Her knowledge in explosives and medicine coming handy to remove their explosive collars and heal the half-starved slaves.

This went on for years during which she lost count of all the slaves Domitius freed with her help.

How he managed to keep it going on for all this time remained a mystery.

But that didn't make his sentence less painful.

Dusty had escaped the trap under the wire but Domitius didn't even put up a fight. Neither him nor his men. All guilty of the same crime. The Legion lost their most honourable soldiers that accursed day, they fell one by one as Dusty watched from her hideout, terrified, praying a God she stopped believing in decades ago.

They tortured them all in plain view, for painfully long hours, she still remembered their screams. She would've sworn their howls would be forever haunting her mind, carved into her bones. But the silence after was even worse. She could barely see if Domitius was alive through her helpless tears.

They untied his men first and put their bodies on crosses. Do those men had any semblance of decency? Then came Domitius' turn. The giant's back was covering in scarlet stripes piercing the flesh all the way to the bone. They laid him down on a cross, she whimpered seeing he was either
dead or too exhausted to put on a fight. They slammed the wooden nails into his wrists.

Her hand was clenched on her incendiary grenades. She couldn't fire it just yet, she would endanger Domitius. Should he still be alive. It was probably an excuse. A miserable pretence to stay hidden in the shadows, trembling in fright, while her friend was being crucified.

Then they pulled the cross up.

She hid further under her hideout and threw up, struggling to stay quiet as she did so. Sobbing pitifully in the dark, dread taking over her entire being.

He was her friend.

Exposed like a piece of dead meat on a cross in burning bright light.

She crawled back towards the exit to see if he was still alive.

She saw his open eyes, something inside his amber irises always seemed otherworldly. Like melted gold dripping inside your very soul and torching your inside.

He was still alive ! He was still alive ! But for how long ?

Most legionaries had left the place, show was over. Only a few recruit remained, pouring gasoline over the corpses bodies around Domitius. The oldest of them must have been fifteen at most. Too young to be burning tortured, crucified bodies. Dusty knew what was coming. They wouldn't wait for Domitius to give away his last breath. They lit the crosses around him, starting to gather around, a fuel container in their hands.

None dared come any closer to the titan. He stared down at them, still in power despite being nailed up. She felt like she got kicked in the head, her friend was in need of help like the slaves they saved. Spite took over her body as she sneaked out of her hole, hand clenched on her deadliest grenade, her finger slipped in the pin.

Domitius saw her, a flash of relief and serenity washed through his eyes when he saw her alive,
when he spotted the glow of the grenade. She knew the man had hoped she would end his life at the moment. she smiled peacefully, removing the pin with a calculated motion.

The children noticed where the grenade had landed too late. The bomb exploded and the blow inflamed the content of the container swallowed them whole. but not Domitius, she was good enough to calculate her shot.

"So. now let's get those nasty nails out of your wrists, shall we ?" She chirped playfully as the recruits fell in agony. "What would you do without me, really ?"

Chapter End Notes

Thank you for reading, I hope you like this story :)
Feel free to comment/kudos/review so I can improve my story telling
You can find Dhole on Tumblr with the username 'Dholes' and you can find me with the username 'Truenekosama'
Have a nice day :)

Dura lex, sed lex

Chapter Summary

The group try to heal their wounds and the Recruits make an unexpected encounter

Chapter Notes

I'm really sorry for the delay, I had a lot of things to do this week and forgot to update, hopefully this won't happen anymore

See the end of the chapter for more notes

It's been nearly a week since the Battle of the Hoover Dam and Leo was bored out of his mind. Nothing happened. They only saw a lost Nightstalker once and Dusty was the one who got all the fun of killing it. The recruit was so tired to wait all day for their Decanus to heal, not to mention the blond had all the energy he wanted when it came to complaining or calling them traitors.

He was no traitor. He obeyed the orders of a Centurion. It wasn't HIS fault if the said Centurion was the treacherous one. But Dead Sea still seemed to deny the part of responsibility of Aurelius despite the fact Aurelius himself argued he was the one who led them here.

Leo sighed, leaning back on the broken pillar near their improvised guard outpost. Attila and Caius were chatting quietly none of them seemed worried about what's coming next. Attila even seemed happier than he was when he was in Nelson. And Caius was still floating around in this candid bubble of his like he didn't even realised what deserting the Legion could imply. Maybe they would return after Dead Sea was healed. Their Decanus still didn't look to agree with them leaving after all.

At least the Couriers didn't try to hold them prisoners. They were free to go, free to stay. The ginger also told them the truth about the NCR, not a single trooper or Ranger came lurking around. Leo knew they would still need to make a move on, they couldn't stay in the camp and the Couriers probably had a lot to do with New Vegas' Independence.

Leo must admit he wanted to follow them and see New Vegas with his own two eyes. He was always told one day the city would be their Rome, the most glorious city of their Empire. But now the recruit knew he would never have the chance to see it himself if not with the Couriers. He was wary of all the profligates living there of course but they probably would leave them alone if he made it clear he was not transporting any chems they could steal. And the Couriers would protect
Leo sighed, he should not bother with this. He would probably never see it anyway.

He looked the town in the distance. It was the closest view he had of the fabled city.

Something glinted not so far from their location. Leo moved away from the broken pillar and squinted. He noticed three crimson forms moving through the ruins of Boulder City. Legion. Nothing to worry about. Maybe they were here to tell them they could go back? Or they were in the Mojave during the fight and were trying to make their way back to the Dam so discreetly? The group hid behind a bunch of rocks, stopping in their tracks. Neither Attila or Caius noticed, his two friends chatting absently.

Leo packed his rifle and walked towards their hideout. Maybe they needed food? Plus he would rather tell them they were simply waiting for their Decanus to heal so they wouldn't consider them as deserters.

The group got agitated when he started to make his way towards them. Leo could count five if them. mostly dog hats. Vexarilii or Frumentarii. They ran away when the recruit made his way toward them. Leo trotted behind the squad, they seemed to retreat farther in the ruins. Leo would soon be out of sight from Attila and Caius. Not that he was particularly in danger in danger with other legionaries.

They finally stopped and the recruit joined them casually. The five dog-headed men were busy loading them weapons, probably readying themselves to cross the Dam.

"Halt, recruit!" Barked one of them holding his palm up.

"Ave." Answered Leo flatly rising his palm to salute them back. The man had Frumentarii markings on his arms, like the four others in his team. Probably an infiltration squad retreating after the defeat. The Frumentarii seemed taken aback by the recruit's calm for some reason but they quickly relaxed.

"What's your name, recruit?"

"Leo, sir."
"Is your Decanus or Centurion here? Who are they?"

"Decanus Dead Sea is here, I answer to him." Explained Leo, the other Frumentarii were whispering between each others, all the secrecy annoyed the recruit but spies oblige after all.

"What are you doing here?"

"Centurion Aurelius ordered our group to retreat when our Decanus was wounded, sir," started Leo looking at who seemed to be the leader of the squad reload his hunting revolver nonchalantly. "We are to wait until Decanus Dead Sea to heal before making a move."

"I see... how many of you are here?" Inquired the man, that was a lot of questions. But since they were of higher rank Leo was bound to answer.

"Well, there's me... two other recruits, Attila and Caius. Decanus Dead Sea. And Centurion Aurelius." Leo thought it would be wise not to mention the two Couriers helping them. He didn't want the squad to start shooting at him and calling him a traitor like Dead Sea already was.

The leader beckoned on of his men closer and mumbled something Leo didn't quiet catch, something about a report. The second Frumentarius bowed and left the group quietly.

"Well, I thank you for the Intel, recruit. And Ave."

The Frumentarius raised his gun and shot.

Leo froze.

What?

The Frumentarius was silent, still holding his gun aimed at him.
Everything felt heavier, or maybe time slowed. His stomach started to twist and burn viciously. Fear? Survival Instinct? This sharp? Even during the Battle of the Hoover Dam he didn't feel his inside curls that way. He tried to massage his stomach to soothe the ache but the press of his own palm send a surge of fire through his body.

He still tried to take the sting out of his belly, he could feel the dizziness slowly taking over, his heart beating faster, his sight blurring. His hand felt wet, oddly warm, bloody. He looked at his palm only to see it covered in red.

Crimson.

Like the clothing he shared with the other men, like the banner he was born under, like the Bull he fought for.

His legs wobbled dangerously as he stumbled backwards until his back hit a boulder.

Leo hiccuped, blood climbed up his oesophagus, invading his mouth with the taste of iron and acid before he slumped down, breathing heavily.

"One down, four to go. The Decanus is wounded, it should be a piece of cake. There will be a reward for the one bringing the Centurion's head. Go!" The three remaining Frumentarii scattered as the leader strolled nonchalantly towards Leo. The recruit weakly reached for his rifle, only managing to drop it on the ground. When he fumbled to take it back the man kicked it away.

"Sorry, recruit. Orders are orders and mine is to kill any deserter I see. I know you were probably just obeying the ones you got from the Centurion but as they say, Dura lex, sed lex (1). I'll make you a favour and end your suffering. Ave, recruit. True to Caesar." Said the Frumentarius pressing the end of his gun on Leo's skull.

Leo cried helplessly, one hand slapped on his gaping wound, teeth clattering. He could feel the cold metal in the middle of his forehead.

He prayed for end to come quickly.
"He's been away for long, innit? Don't you think we need to check up on him, mate?"

"Caius, if he's in danger he would scream. We don't need to go check on him, he's not a baby." Argued Attila. He did not want to leave his post to find Leo taking a shit somewhere when he could stay here with the comic book Dusty lend him.

"Yeah, but... I'm gettin' worried here, mate. What if he got ambushed by a Cazador or somethin'?"

"There's no Cazador around here." Noted Attila shrugging.

"A Radscorpion then!"

"He would still have the time to scream to alert us. I'm sure he's fine, Caius."

The brunette recruit didn't seem satisfied with the answer but stopped arguing all the same. When Leo left he seemed to be looking for something, and he left farther than usual. Maybe he saw someone and went to check. Dusty had told them not to go all alone but the other recruit did anyway so it was probably not a NCR trooper, maybe it was just a Giant Rat, or a Nightstalker like last time. But still, Caius had the nagging feeling something was about to happen.

Then a gunshot rang in the distance.

Attila dropped the book he was reading, closing his hand on his brand new revolver.

"Tilly?" Whined Caius pressing himself against the scout's flank. "You heard? There's people around..."

"Someone needs to go tell the others," Attila's breathing was laboured, instantly reminding himself the ranger and his knife. "And someone else needs to stay here until they arrive."

"You go, Tilly."
"Excuse me ?" Strangled the spotted recruit. Caius couldn't be serious, right ? It wasn't a good idea to leave him alone, Caius almost nearly got into a fight he would be teared apart by whatever was coming.

"Ya fought last time, innit ? Now it's ma turn. Don't worry, mate. I got your back." The brunette offered a weak smile and a thumb up. He was terrified. His left eye was blinking but he still insisted on fighting.

Attila knew he was the fastest. He could run, warn the others, come back here as fast as possible to assist Caius before things got heated. It was the most rational approach. With his healing leg and wounded hand he wouldn't last very long if they came to close combat.

Caius pushed him away roughly. "Go, Tilly ! You run fast ! You bring them 'ere ! Go !"

Attila didn't wait any longer and dashed away.

Caius watched him run towards the camp down the hill, the scout was still the fastest, he would bring Aurelius, he would bring Dusty, maybe even Domitius, one of them would go and check on Leo and bring him back ali-

BANG

Caius stopped breathing, looking at the place from where the gunshot was coming. He couldn't hear anything else, not a scream, not any fighting sound. Nothing. Just dead silence. His left eye blinked faster, his hand moved on his own will and started to toy with his short hair, pulling on them viciously. Caius cursed under his breath, it wasn't the time for this. Couldn't he just get a hold of himself for once ?

"Recruit ?"

Caius jumped and barked something in latin, slamming his back against the wall to face the unknown legionary. The man was wearing a dog head and goggles. He showed no aggression, an evasive smile on his lips.

"Oh !... uh... A-… Aye ! I mean Ave !" Stuttered the brunette. The stranger chuckled amusingly, probably because of the blinking eye and hair-pulling. Caius felt ashamed to be mocked but he
couldn't help feel relieved to see another legionary here.

"Ave. What is your name, recruit ?"

"C-Caius, sir !"

"Caius," his name rolled on the man's tongue, it felt odd. The wrong feeling was back again. "Are you alone here, Caius ?"

"N-No... There's Attila and - TIN CAN ! - and Leo." The dog-headed man raised an eyebrow under his goggles but didn't comment on the outburst.

"I met Leo. He saw us and came to greet us."

So Leo was still alive ? But he heard gunshots, why would there be gunshots, then ? "Why did people shoot ? I heard two bangs, sir."

"You did ? Well well, aren't you a sharp one. It was nothing to worry about. Leo is still with the leader of my squad, the rest of my team went to greet the rest of your friends, Caius."

"He is ? Where ?"

The man smiled and walked toward his observation post, pointing at a spot in the mess of ruins laying before them. "Over there. You're an observant one. Maybe you'll see the red."

Caius turned his back on the back and squinted in the distance, still picking his hair with his left hand. There was a little opening where the legionary pointed, very, very small. He did see red indeed. A laying faceless body, wearing a legion armour, with an exploded head ringed with blood.

"Do you see him, recruit ? You will look like him soon."

The man quickly grabbed the back of his head, pulling him backward, exposing his throat, slipping
his machete along the soft flesh of his neck.

"DEATHCLAW!" Barked Caius, the scream startled his assailant and the recruit instinctively sent his right elbow in his stomach. The Frumentarius toppled backward, dropping his blade in the process. The surprisingly powerful blow suck out the air from his lungs. How could this brat be yelling random words and plucking with his own hair overpower him?

"Why did ya do that, mate? We're on the same frickin' side!" Cried out the brunette recruit holding his right palm held up in front of him. The Frumentarius squared up, he was still more experienced, and he had a mission to accomplish.

"You are a deserter, recruit. No hard feelings. Just doing my job."

Caius didn't have the time to work out an answer before the Frumentarius dived, hitting the recruit square in the chest, sending the both of them to roll on the floor. The recruit barked words but the trick wouldn't work anymore and the other man slammed his fists in the kid's face. The brunette blindly tried to block but the Frumentarius had a better training.

Caius was scared out of his mind, he didn't understand what was going on, he didn't understand why the other legionary was attacking him, why they attacked Leo. His heart pounded madly, the blood in his ears nearly deafening him. He needed to survive, he needed to live, he needed to fight.

He slowly forgot everything, his mind erasing everything that didn't serve his immediate survival, next all that he knew is that people were trying to kill them, that others were in danger, Attila was probably fighting too. Caius fumbled on the ground with his right hand to find the machete the stranger dropped earlier, enduring the punches resonating in his skull to get the weapon.

An explosion blasted. Dusty. They fought back.

The roar surprised the Frumentarius, clearly not expecting this noise. Caius jumped on the occasion to grab the blade and slash through the man's flank, sending him roll away with a pained yelp. He needed to get himself safe, then go and help Attila and the others. Caius charged violently, slamming the man back to the ground, he was impaired by his tick still possessing his left arm, just like the Frumentarius had to keep his left arm wrapped around his body to clog the gaping wound.

Caius barely realised what he was doing, using his machete clumsily like a blunt object, barely managing to do anything else but superficial cuts and grating the other man's armour. The other
man hit back, aiming for weak points every time, making the recruit whine and bark random words and curses.

"I will-... kill you, recruit... I will-... kill you then-... I will kill-... the rest of your team... I will-… bring your heads to the new Caesar..." Huffed the Frumentarius grabbing the recruit's throat and crushing his windpipe.

Caius' grip on the machete tightened, he raised the blade, ready to slam it into the other man's neck.

But could he really do it?

He was a Frumentarius.

He served Caesar.

He didn't have the right to fight back, innit?

A crimson beam flashed before his eyes, he found himself sent back on the ground, the Frumentarius kept his grasp on the recruit's throat and moved the other to seize his wrist. The older man twisted the brunette's arm and brought the blade back down. Caius whimpered as the edge pressed again against his already bruised neck. He resisted the other's push, he could feel the trickle of blood seeping out of the Frumentarius' wounds but the man didn’t stop. He was a proud soldier of Caesar's Legion, he had a mission and unlike those traitors he had sworn he would succeed or die trying.

Caius felt the pain in his awkwardly bent arm overwhelm his strength, he was about to give up. The blade would slash his throat, he would bleed out, he would die, he wouldn't be able to help Attila, the others would die, they would all die, he would die he would die he would d-

A gunshot rang just near them and the Frumentarius slumped down.

Caius cried out, trembling and shaking, ripping entire chunks of hair out of his skull.
"Caius..."

The brunette opened his eyes to see Attila holding out his fuming revolver. The scout was here.

Attila came to his rescue.

The spotted recruit limped toward his friend and pushed the older man off Caius' body.

"Come here. Get up. The others went to help Leo."

Chapter End Notes

I hope you liked this chapter and thanks for reading :)  
Feel free to leave your comments/reviews/kudos they help me improve the story  
If you want to find me on Tumblr my username is Truenekosama and Dhole is Dholes  
:D
Chapter Summary

The Frumentarii are done for and the group has to heal their wounded

Chapter Notes

I'm sorry for the waiting, I have a lot to deal with lately, I'll do my best to make sure you don't have to wait so long next time

Leo was nearly hyperventilating, he probably was. The Frumentarius took a wicked pleasure keeping him on hold that way, watching him lose all control or maybe expecting him to bleed to death instead of wasting a bullet.

The recruit felt miserable like that. He gave them all the information they needed, not realising he sent his friends straight into a death trap. He hated himself, self-loathing overcoming everything else in his agonising body. He did not want to die. Not like this. He has always been told he should put on a fight but how could he fight against someone of the same banner.

Everything was slow around him. Maybe blood loss. Maybe his brain working faster to find an exit. He could see the other man's smirk widen slowly, his eyes sparkling brighter. The recruit's breathing cooled down, his heartbeat became heavier, vibrating through his whole body, shaking his thoughts every time it pulsed, howling its desire to live. The tip of his fingers sparked, stars exploding in front of his eyes, freezing fire clawing inside his body.

He wanted to live !

He wanted to live !

He wanted to fight !

The time strangely stretched out, like some superior force lent him a hand. Maybe Mars himself was watching.

The Frumentarius' finger tightened around the trigger, right as Leo's hands snaked around the other man's wrist, clenching around it viciously with the strength of a furious and desperate man, twisting it right when the bullet escaped the barrel.

Red filled his sight, his face was splattered with warm blood.

Not his.

The Frumentarius' body fell back. Head exploded by the shot, hand still clenched on his revolver.
Leo looked at the dead man, blood dripped down his face, pieces of sticky flesh slipping viscously on his face. Brain. He had brain matter on his face.

The whole world fell back on his shoulders, crushing his lungs, burning his blood, piercing his guts, freezing his spine, drilling through his eyes and ears.

Leo gagged and threw up violently, blood and bile mixed up sinking in the dusty ground.

The recruit sobbed, his body shaking uncontrollably, pressing his dirty hands back on his wounds. Leo dragged his sweaty body to cover, curling up in the soiled dirt. He couldn't handle the pain, he couldn't handle the itch of the Legion's blood on his body. He killed Legion. He should have accepted his fate. Like a real legionary.

He was a sham, a lowlife, a miserable man, not even a real man.

He held his painful pitiful body tighter.

The others would come checking up on their leader. They would end him once for all. After ending the others. He would die like a dog, not even worthy of the death of a warrior. He never was one to start with. The most pitiful recruit of the Legion. He should have accepted the bullet. Maybe he still could. Maybe if he managed to crawl toward the revolver in the Frumentarius' hand and shoot himself.

With a lot of luck he wouldn't miss for once. It was the right thing to do. It was his duty as a legionary. Never be taken alive. Never desert.

Leo sobbed louder, he could also let himself bleed out but he didn't deserve another second of living. His heart sank deeper inside his body as he raised his agonising body off the ground and dragged himself toward the warm corpse. He weakly tried to pry the gun off the Frumentarius' firm hands. Rigor Mortis. Leo hated to know this. He cried louder, he wouldn't even be allowed to die.

"Leo ! Leo, are you alright ?" The Courier jumped by his side, putting him in lateral security position skilfully. "Shit ! C'mere, child ! Let's get you patched up, come here."

Leo let her pull him up, Dusty was too small to handle his entire weight, choosing to half drag him back to the camp.

He wouldn't die a legionary.

They had to move. Leo's wounds were to severe to be treated in an unsafe camp, they needed to move to a defensible place. They couldn't stay in an NCR camp, Dead Sea and Aurelius made that clear, but they couldn't stay in a regular city that could be infiltrated by Frumentarii any time of the day, especially in the aftermath of the Battle of the Hoover Dam.

Nelson was mentioned and few times and the group decided to settle there. Dead Sea also mentioned he'd like to fetch some of his stuff before the Legion camp got raided by scavengers.
The rest of the recruits also agreed, all but the heavily sedated Leo.

The kid was given med-X after multiple panic crisis. The Decanus and Centurion agreed reluctantly to Dusty's proposal when she brought up the chem to keep him calm. Leo was too weak to be agitated that way. Of course that also meant he couldn't walk by himself. Aurelius offered to carry him on his back during the trip.

The second problem was their Legion gears.

"I am not wearing your profligate clothes!" Barked Dead Sea sitting resolutely on his cot. Clothes that belonged to the NCR on top of all. The insult.

"Well if you want to be shot on sight that's your problem, child. But don't travel with us then, you can't endanger the group." Retorted Dusty giving Aurelius some sets of clothes for Attila and Caius she found laying around. She had the audacity to call him a child, it annoyed him out of his mind. "Plus I'm not asking you to put on NCR armour, just some pants. It's not a big deal."

"I don't care! I will not put on these... rags." Spat the blond wilfully ignoring the set of clothing next to him. It was actually very reasonable, none of them were typically worn by the NCR, it was more like civilian gears. A regular pair of jeans, plain black shirt, a long grey duster, and combat boots. Very sincerely he found them quite fitting, and the fact she managed to find them in his size meant she actually made the effort to look for something that would suit him. But still it didn't feel right to wear anything that wasn't coming from the Legion.

"Love, please. I won't be able to defend anyone while carrying Leo and we can't afford to have the whole Mojave attacking us," argued Aurelius crouching in front of him. The Centurion looked awkward in his cargo pants, not used to the feeling of having both his legs wrapped in fabric, however the tight white shirt fitted him just fine to Dead Sea's taste. "We can't go back to the Legion anymore. We might as well get used to the local customs."

Dead Sea pouted a moment, Dusty simply shrugged and left the tent, leaving him alone with Aurelius. Domitius left earlier to get their gear ready and Attila and Caius left the place to change in other tents. Besides Leo tripping on his cot they were alone.

Dead Sea sighed loudly, shoulders slumping down. "I don't know, Reily. I don't know if I can do it... Legion is all I know. I don't want their customs. They aren't mine." Confessed the blond faintly. Aurelius put both his palms against his lovers thighs a pained smile on his face. His hands felt nice on his skin but he knew he was going to hate what would come next.

"I know, love. If there was another way I would... Listen, I did a mistake, I wanted to save you and instead I took our home away from us, but please! Let me try to fix it. We can try to make this place like home. It won't be the same of course but we can try! And we won't have to hide anymore! The people here, they don't care! We can be together, and none of us will be crucified or dismembered for just kissing each other!" Aurelius paused, sighing loudly before reaching to brush Dead Sea's cheek lovingly. "I just want you safe... and happy. I don't care about anything else. I'm sorry if this was not what you were looking for."

"Reily, I know what you tried to do," said Dead Sea moving the Centurion's hand away from his face clearly annoyed. "But I don't want this! I don't want to live the life of the Profligates, they don't serve any purpose, their lives are hollow, none of them would give their lives for a greater good and I don't want to live like this!" Aurelius looked deeply wounded by the Decanus' words and the blond immediately regretted saying them. "Listen... I... I need a meaning to my life. I love
"Love... I'm sorry, I-" Aurelius' body was shook by his sob, seeing Aurelius like that pierced through Dead Sea's chest. What an idiot he was. Aurelius deserved better than his tantrum, better than his grumpy ass always belittling him. He deserved better than tears and fear of crucifixion. "I love you. I don't know what else to do... I... *hic*... My purpose is you... I don't even know what I can do here... I don't know how we will survive or how far the Couriers' mercy will extend but... *hic*... as long as you do as much as merely tolerate me by your side... *hic*... I will... I will go wherever you please, Dead Sea... I love you... *hic*... I love you so much. I would die for you... And I will take more pride in this death than I ever would if I was dying for Caesar."

"Stop. Stop saying you're going to die! You're not dying on me! I won't allow it!" Barked the blond furious, waving his remaining arm in the air. Why was it so hard to breath? "I-... I can't... lose you and... I can't lose you and the Legion... It hurts too much... I... Why is everything so hard... The Legion doesn't want us to love each others... and this place will never accept our existence... Is there anywhere we really belong?... I don't... I don't know... I don't know anymore... I'm so tired, Aurelius... I just want to rest... I just want to fall asleep in your arms and never wake up... Is this too much to ask?... Peace... just for a moment... Just a little..."

"Dead... Love... Please... don't cry..."

The blond hiccupped painfully. His constricted chest and burning throat made it so hard to inhale. He could feel the salty water covering his face but refused to admit its existence, even when Aurelius tenderly kissed the tears away, whispering words he craved to hear. Dead Sea grabbed the bigger man's shirt weakly with his remaining arm, slowly falling apart as the bigger man pulled him in a warm embrace. It felt like an entire part of his being has been ripped out of his chest, leaving a hollow feeling inside his soul.

Aurelius kissed his patiently, cradling the blond between his arms, waiting for him to come back to his senses. Dead Sea couldn't stop crying, his hand clenched on Aurelius' neck as the Centurion kissed him. He gave everything he had left in the kiss, it was all had left, his last thread of sanity. He let it swallow it all until he couldn't think anymore, waiting for it to fill the hole inside his chest.

He didn't want him to let go, he didn't want him to leave, he didn't want anyone to leave him anymore, he only wanted a place to belong, a place where he could fulfil his destiny, a place where he could love Aurelius in plain sight with no fear of retribution. He wanted home.

He wanted to go home.

He wanted to find home.

He wanted home.

Chapter End Notes

Thanks for reading!
If you find typo or anything to criticise/comment, feel free to leave me your review :)
Ubi bene, ibi patria

Chapter by Dhole

Chapter Summary

The Legionaries and couriers head out.

Chapter Notes

Sorry for a very long wait!!

Attila pulled the zipper up with an intense satisfaction. Both him and Caius were busy changing clothes, putting on civilian clothing instead of their legion armour. 'Disguise' Aurelius had said when he gave the two of them the sets Dusty brought them. Caius and him were separated by nothing but a partition of thin fabric giving the both of them some welcomed intimacy.

He missed wearing pants so much, he always hated those stupid skirts the legionaries wore. He waited a few seconds, simply enjoying the feeling of the fabric wrapping both his legs. No more sunburns on his thighs and calves anymore. He sighed contentedly before slipping his shirt on, hiding the two scars under his pectorals and the whip marks on his back.

He grabbed the leather jacket Dusty had brought him, it was barely used. Attila couldn’t remember a time when he owned such a nice jacket, he slipped in on, careful not to knock his sensitive hand in the sleeve. It suited him perfectly, the Courier managed to find his size on the first try, she was either sharp or extremely attentive. Maybe lucky.

The leather smelt nice, Attila had to resist the urge to rub his nose against it. He looked up the roof of the tent and prayed for whatever God could hear him to never let him wear Legion gear again. It felt like he was back three years ago. Before his family was sold to the Legion, before his arms were tattooed like he was a cow belonging to them, before his freedom and family were torn away from him.

He wondered if Dead Sea or Aurelius would let him go. Maybe they would keep him around. Make their group a little Legion. Attila didn't like the idea. Aurelius and Dead Sea have been decent to him so far but he didn't want to do anything related to the Legion. Maybe he could plead his case to the Couriers, the two of them seemed prone to protect those who sought refuge.

Attila noted to go and speak to Domitius and Dusty when they will leave, maybe he could try to suggest it discreetly so the other wouldn't suspect his plans, maybe pretend he-
Attila jumped, the noise came from Caius' side of the tent. The scout grabbed his revolver and rushed towards his friend... only to find him sitting on his ass with his pants rolled up around his ankles and a sorry look on his face.

"Don't shoot me, mate... Those are just so hard to put on..." Mumbled Caius scrambling to get back on his feet. the brunette recruit had his shirt and jacket on his shoulders but couldn't seem to slip properly inside his jeans. Probably because the end of his trousers were stuck under the sole of his feet.

"Caius... it pains me to ask but do you need help with your pants ?" Sighed Attila watching his friend struggling to pull them up.

Caius paused a second, glaring daggers at his denim like they were the biggest insult to mankind. "Yeah, mate... I just want to be done with this... leg prison."

Attila huffed a laughter and went behind Caius, holding the waist of his jeans. "Alright, lift your left leg." Caius obeyed and Attila pulled the sleeve up until it was above the recruit's ankle. "Now put it down and lift the other one." Caius obeyed again and Attila did the same then pulled the waistband up.

"You did it, mate ! Still don' want to wear those, but you did it !"

"We're not done yet, Caius. You need to zip up your fly." Caius seemed defeated. Why couldn't it be over ? He didn't want to spend hours putting these on every day. "It's not hard, you just take that thingy, pull it up and close the button." Explained the spotted scout shrugging calmly. The other recruit looked at the said 'fly' and fumbled with it blindly before managing to close it properly. "There, you see ! It's not that hard ! Now let's get out, the others must be waiting for us."

Attila then left the tent, Caius on his heels, following him closely. Domitius and Dusty were both waiting outside, chatting calmly, a bunch of small bags laying at their feet. Attila couldn't help but that if Caius kept sticking to him he wouldn't be able to speak with Domitius or Dusty about his wish to leave definitively the Legion.

"Hi, children ! How are you doing ?" She chirped from her spot. Domitius also nodded in their direction, not saying a word yet.

"We're fine. Are we going now ?"

"Yeah, soon. The big boys just need to get dressed." Answered Dusty with a large smile. "Are you ok, child ? You walk like a Lakelurk."
Caius grunted vaguely, he indeed looked very uncomfortable in his pants. They weren't really tight but Attila had no doubt the recruit must feel crushed by the fabric wrapping his legs... leg prison as he called it earlier. "It feels wrong... why can't I wear my toga?" Mumbled the brunette pouting like a child.

"Sorry, child. But only legionaries wear toga, anyone would spot you if you tried. You'll have to deal with the terrible burden of wearing trousers I'm afraid."

Caius sighed sadly, trying to find a comfortable way to fit in his slacks, Attila simply patted his shoulder with a gentle smile. The tentative was welcomed but not very effective since the recruit just shrugged and shook his right leg.

The two recruit stayed silent in the middle of the camp, wondering when their leaders would exit the place. Dead Sea and Aurelius finally exited the place a few minutes later. The Centurion was simply wearing a tight white shirt and cargo pants, Leo was tied to his back, wrapped in blankets. Attila noted that the recruit's face was nestles on a red cape, probably Aurelius'. Dead Sea on the other hand was wearing a long duster with a dark shirt and loose jeans.

The bigger man seemed to be much more uncomfortable than the Decanus but didn't show it as clearly as Caius was.

"Can we go, now? If we want to reach Nelson before the night we need to hurry." Growled Dead Sea still hostile to the two Couriers presence. he wanted to go back to Nelson and get some of his stuff back. Hopefully his chocolate would still be here too.

"Yeah, you all take a bag, not big boy of course he already has to give a piggyback ride. I put all the food and water I could scavenge in there, we don't know what will be left in your camp, right?"

Dead Sea sighed and reluctantly took one of the packs, struggling to charge it on his back without his left arm. Attila also took one, imitated by Caius. The scout's haversack was filled with pre-war cans and bottles of clean water, there was enough to feed the lot of them for two days or so. With the stocks they had they may have about a week of food, and if Domitius duffle also contained food they may have enough an extra week. Maybe less. Probably less since Domitius probably had weapons in there, or medical supplies and explosives for Dusty.

The group started walking, Aurelius and Caius walked awkwardly, irregular steps accompanied by strange twists of hips. Dead Sea seemed annoyed too but simply punctuating his stroll with wider strides every once in a while. Dusty seemed greatly amused by the situation, unless the satisfied smile on her face was her default expression, hard to tell.

The two Courier followed the road leading to Nelson, Domitius walking slightly ahead of the ginger. The legionaries walked lazily behind, too busy with their annoying apparel to pay attention
to their surroundings. Attila jumped on the occasion to pace faster until he was at the same level as the Couriers.

"Is everything alright, child? Troubled by the infamous curse of your slacks?" Inquired Dusty with a calm smile.

"No, it's not that... uh... I was wondering if... if it was alright for a legionary to stay in New Vegas?" Maybe it wasn't vague enough, he didn't want the others to overhear him.

"Do you know why Domitius was sentenced in the first place, child?" The question took the scout aback, wondering where she was going with that. He nodded negatively and both the Couriers exchanged a quiet look, like asking for permission to tell the story.

"We smuggled slaves out." Said Domitius flatly, eyes focused on the horizon. Attila looked at him in disbelief, did he really heard that or did he dreamed it. This man saved slaves? Like his family? Could he have once saved his family? It was highly unlikely but the scout wanted to believe. "We smuggled many slaves out, mostly women and children. But occasionally we helped a legionary to escape too. Usually young kids like you. Children that had nothing to do with the Legion. If you want out or you feel like Centurion Aurelius or Decanus Dead Sea are forcing your hand come to me."

Attila took a moment to nod. Domitius saved slaves, mostly women. Maybe his sisters and mother were part of the lot, or at least one of them. he couldn't help but wonder. He couldn't help but hope. His heart beating madly inside his chest.

"How many did you save?" Asked Attila softly. Maybe. Maybe if he saved many. Maybe they would be a part of his protégées. Domitius paused a few seconds, trying to recall a precise number.

"I don't know how much," he admitted. "I lost count, but I know Dusty and I saved more than a hundred." The ex-legionary stared at the horizon, a longing melancholia tainting his golden eyes. "Why do you ask, kid?"

"My... my sisters... and my mother... they were sold to the Legion, I had hoped... maybe..."

"When were they taken?"

Attila could feel his lip tremble and his eyes sting, maybe he had a chance, maybe they were safe away from this Hell that was the Legion. His next breath came out shakily, he cursed himself for setting his bar so high. There was no way he met them. The chances were too thin. He couldn't have met them. But still. He hoped.

"Three years ago." The scout finally breathed out. The big Courier twitched and fumble a moment with his pocket, shoving a pill between his teeth, a faint hiss escaping his throat. The giant
swallowed it without water as Dusty patted his shoulder, offering a silent support for a wound Attila knew nothing of.

"Sorry, kid," that was it. They were still there. Or they were dead. "Three years ago... it's when I was sentenced to death. I'm afraid I wasn't here anymore when you were all taken."

Attila felt sorrow overwhelm him, he had hoped... foolishly that they had a chance to escape when they did not. They never did. They never had a way out, the only one disappeared before they even arrived.

"Hey, child? Calm down a little, will ya?" Called out Dusty patting his back gently. Attila realised he must have been crying abundantly. He couldn't afford to be spotted by the others, he didn't want them to prey on him. "I can still look it up if you want? Maybe they were a part of the last lot we got out? And if not I know Rangers often raid slave camps to get them out. I still have plenty of contacts that could look it up for you, ok? Stop those big big tears, child. You're not alone anymore."

The scout nodded a bit too quickly, encouraged by the ginger's large smile.

"So you want something else to cheer you up?" She added with a mocking grin.

"Oh, no." groaned Domitius shoving his hat down his face. Attila gave the ginger a very confused look as her smirk grew larger, she pulled a wallet out of her jacket and started fumbling with a bunch of pictures before showing him one.

"Here! Look! It's Domi's first time wearing pants! Isn't he adorable?"

Attila took a look at the photo, it displays a view of Domitius from the back, he didn't had his cowboy hat or duster yet and his hair were much shorter than now, but more importantly, it exposed Domitius in an awkward pose. The spotted recruit held a chuckle. The posture was glorious, both legs bowed widely, both his arms held away from his sides. It looked like one of those pictures about cowboys he used to see in old pre-war books.

The more he looked at it harder it was not to laugh, and of course Dusty kept exhibiting it until the scout burst in laughter, only feeling slightly guilty by Domitius' flustered pout.

"Here's what I like to see! Child like you should be laughing more often. And let us deal with your relatives, if we find anything we will let your know." She chirped lightly putting the photograph back in her wallet. Attila wondered if all the pictures he could see depicted Domitius in embarrassing situations. Somehow he had the nagging feeling it was very likely.

"Thank you," whispered the scout with a faint smile. "I can never repay you for that."
"We were not asking for a reward. We never did. Neither of us." Retorted Domitius turning his head briefly to face the smaller legionary. There was something in his statement that rang inside his chest. He couldn't put his finger on it, yet the feeling remained even when the giant Courier looked away to focus again on the road.

For the first time in a very long time, Attila felt hope.

The night was starting to fall when they finally reached Nelson. Aurelius was exhausted, sweating heavily, panting loudly. With the dead weight on his back he was quick to lose his stamina. the recruit was damn lucky the group didn't leave him behind. Since they left the crew barely stopped in a gas station and a farm to check on Leo, drink, and make sure Dead Sea's glycaemia wasn't taking any wild swing. The Decanus has been pouting all the while, probably because of the exposition of his annoying weakness to the Couriers and recruits.

At least he would get his bed back tonight. Hopefully. If scavengers didn't already dismantled

It and took it away. The blond growled his annoyance, startling Caius in the process. The brunette has been on his heel nearly the whole time. His clumsy gait started to greatly exasperate the Decanus, everyone got used to their trousers but the recruit, still limping pitifully.

Attila never showed any sign of any sign of displeasure reminding them his Profligate origins. since they left Boulder City the scout has been hanging with the two Couriers, whispering with them, sometimes laughing whenever the ginger pulled things out of her wallet much to the bigger man's dismay. The affection the spotted recruit seem to have for the two Profligates offended the Decanus, and it also seemed to sadden Caius. The youngest recruit probably believed his friend was going to leave him behind.

"Decanus Dead Sea ? May I ask ya somethin' ?" Mumbled the brunette sadly, Dead Sea didn't want to chat with the recruit at all but boredom was too strong for him to ignore a potential distraction.

"What is it, Caius ?"

"What will happen to us ?" Blurted the recruit toying with the edge of his jacket, the blond couldn't tell if it was one of his tics or just an innocent way to soothe himself.

"What do you mean ?"

"We can' go back to the Legion, innit ? Does that mean we'll stay 'ere ? What are we goin' to do ?"

Dead Sea exhaled gravely. He didn't need this. He didn't know. He didn't want to know. He didn't want Caius to be right about the Legion. He didn't want this. He didn't want anything. "I don't
know," simply stated the older legionary, focusing his gaze on Aurelius' back. As long as the man was here he didn't need a destination.

"What do ya mean ?" Panicked Caius now fully pulling on the buttons of his jacket.

"I don't know, Caius. I can't offer you any guidance. I don't even know what I will do myself."
Spelled out the Decanus, cringing.

"B-But ! Y-Ya must have an idea, innit ?" begged the recruit still fumbling nervously. "Ya always know everything, you must have an idea, innit ?"

The recruit's insistence was getting on his nerves. He did not want this conversation. He did not want to face the void that became his future. He did not want to admit his failure. He did not want to be confronted to the reality of the situation. He did not want.

"No, recruit. I don't know what to do. I'm a hopeless miserable one-armed man with no plans for the future what so ever !" He growled menacingly, making the recruit blurt a curse in surprise. "If you wish so much for guidance, why don't you go see your Profligate friend and have a lovely chatter with the Couriers ? I'm sure they will be very pleased to tell you how to cut off someone's arm !"

Caius swore, trying to get a hold of his ticks, stepping away from the blond, not yet leaving but taking his distance, nearly crying.

"Still here ? What are you waiting for, recruit ? Don't you want out too ? Like everyone here ?" The young man whimpered again, ticking. "Haven't you heard ? Go ! Run !" Barked the blond, making Caius cry out and go hide with the Couriers. Good, he didn't want a traitor and coward around him anyway. He didn't want anyone to bother him.

"You're unfair, Dead." Commented Aurelius, still heaving from the intense effort. "He doesn't deserve your anger, he obeyed my orders like he was supposed to."

"Something to add, Centurion ? Don't you have a Legion to betray or a lover's arm to cut off ?" Snapped the Decanus glaring daggers at the bigger man, the hurt, vulnerable expression flashing on his beloved's face had the same effect as a knife plunging inside his chest, but he showed nothing, deciding to use it to fuel his wrath instead. "Quiet, now ? You sure had much to say earlier."

"I won't let you..." breathed out the Centurion painfully, his trembling voice shaking Dead Sea's heart. How dared he have this effect on him ? "I won't let you destroy yourself and eject everyone out of your life. I'm not leaving you alone."

The hiccup that shook the Decanus was so violent he nearly tripped. The Centurion had too much
power over him, too much power over his heart. Caesar's words about infatuation between two men rang inside his ears and for the first time he despised his leader's words.
Mutari non potest.

Nelson was empty when they finally reached the camp. It was pitch black that night, thick clouds blocking the moonlight, and if not for the light of the flashlight from Dusty's pipboy they wouldn't be able to see very far as they scouted the place. There was not a single sound to be heard, not a single soul in the barracks or even signs of invasion. No one in sight but for the last mongrel of the Legion laying in front of its master's barracks. No doubt the dog would never see him again. The animal raised its head when he saw the group, growling madly, its fangs glowing menacingly in the dark.

"Easy, boy. We're not here to steal." Purred Dusty waving at the dirty, starved beast. The mongrel seemed confused by the ginger but not exactly aggressive anymore.

"Down, dog." Growled Dead Sea ousting the animal away, it seemed to recognise the voice and happily wiggled its tail, jumping to greet the exhausted and bitter Decanus. "Back, dog! Your master's dead, stop bothering me!"

The animal whimpered and flattened on the ground, he didn't understand the blond's words but knew the man was not to be angered. Dead Sea ignored the disapproving glares on his back and made his way towards his house, who cared about a lost dog anyway?

Aurelius watched him slam the door behind himself, not even doing as much as bidding them goodnight. He needed to speak to him tonight. The mongrel didn't move, only looking at the group with humid eyes. Caius trotted towards the animal and patted its head gently.

"Sorry, doggy. I'm afraid your master's dead. I mean... he's not comin' back, doggy. He's... sorry, doggy. 'ere. Drink some water. Good dog. Your master's goin' to miss ya." Mumbled the recruit pouring purified water in the animal's dry, empty bowl. The mongrel lapped the water hungrily, it must have been days since it drank anything, no doubt it would have let itself starve if the recruit didn't offered some of his water.

The mongrel had orange eyes and a darker coat than the usual sand coloured fur its peers had except for the tip of its filthy paws which looked like they were dipped in white paint. Caius petted the animal a bit more, giving it another bottle of water when he saw the bowl has been licked clean.

"Alright, big boy, let's tuck kiddo in his bed then get ourselves some good deserved rest." Chirped Dusty tapping on the Centurion's shoulder. Aurelius was too exhausted to voice a proper answer, simply nodding and following the ginger in the recruits barracks. She moved the blankets of the closest bed out of the way and Aurelius tried to drop the recruit as gently as possible. The Courier helped him lay the kid down, she moved the covers wrapping Leo to check his stomach wound. The snitches didn't snap, good. "Ok, big boy, I'll clean this real quick and give him another dose of med-X and an IV. You get some sleep, and take care of your cutie pie, would ya?"

"I will, Courier. Thank you." Answered the Centurion calmly, exiting the barracks. Attila and Caius were both waiting in front of the barracks, waiting for permission to get their rest, Aurelius just pointed them the door and the two children jumped in swiftly, impatient to find their beds. The bigger man then turned at the black dog still panting near the door, now much happier with a bowl full of clean water and a can of Pork 'n Beef opened in front of its crummy nose, probably a gift from Caius. "You take the watch."

The mongrel barked happily and shoved it's muzzle in the can, licking its content clean. Aurelius
then noticed Domitius leaning on one of the empty houses, the two men exchanged a nod and the Centurion walked towards Dead Sea's house. He didn't exactly want to bicker with the blond in the dead of the night when they both should sleep but he needed to clear up some things.

He pushed the door open warily. The place was not lit, not even a candle, just a faint glow slipping through the planks nailed to the window. The Decanus' bag has been dropped on the ground a few steps away from the door. In the darkness Aurelius couldn't see where his lover went.

"Dead ? Where are you ?" He called, keeping his voice down, not wanting to worry the Courier outside. "Dead ? Are you even here ?"

The Centurion fumbled blindly, struggling to make his way despite how familiar the place was. His foot bumped into a bunch of clothes near the end of the bed. Aurelius picked them up, recognising the fabric of the blond's duster. A form stirred on the bed making the bigger man grin amusingly, he picked up the rest of the clothes, counting a shirt and ample trousers, all but Dead's underwear. The Centurion folded them neatly and put them on a chair nearby.

He then proceeded to remove his own shirt and get rid of his accursed pants. Aurelius stumbled in the dark when he tried to climb on the bed, looking for his lover's body, finally wrapping his arms around the laying form once he found him. The Decanus was already wrapped in blankets, barely moving when the bigger man kissed his neck.

"Later Reily. I'm tired." Mumbled Dead Sea sleepily pushing his lover's inquisitive lips away from his nape.

"Is everything alright, love ? Do you want to talk about it ?" Insisted Aurelius giving the blond the space he required.

"Tomorrow. I want to sleep for now." Answered Dead Sea turning to face the bigger man and hide against his chest. Aurelius sighed and hugged the round body, keeping him tight between his arms. They needed to rest.

Caius was glad to get his bed back along with his hats and fuzzy worms, he had put on one of his clean togas to sleep, getting rid of his trousers. Attila seemed mixed, sighing a lot before crashing on his cot only getting rid of his boots and jacket. The scout was exhausted, no doubt, all this time walking to make it to safety with his barely healed calf must have been draining.

Caius fiddled with his toy absently, mind buzzing, unable to rest. He feared his friend would leave him behind and never come back, like Decanus Dead Sea said. The Decanus seemed to be at his worse lately. He had lost his arm, nearly died, and the Legion now tried to kill him. Caius only wished him the best but the blond was clearly not willing to accept his help.

And finally there was Leo, the recruit didn't open his eyes since they first gave him a dose of Med-X and did nothing but occasionally whimper or gag. The recruit was now lying still after another dose of chems, a pouch of clear liquid dripping inside his arm, Dusty told him it was like food. That Leo couldn't eat because of his injury and needed the 'Aivee' so he wouldn't starve.

Caius tried to stay in bed and rest like he was asked to. To sleep. He was depleted of all energy, his eyes were heavy, lids fighting to close but his mind roamed endlessly, focused on his friend's distress. Leo being the most severe one. The recruit gave up and jumped out of his bed, walking quietly towards Leo's bunk. It wasn't his real bed, Caius feared his friend would be confused upon waking up. Maybe he could try to tell him. Wake him up himself so Leo would know he wasn't
"Leo ? Leo, wake up. Leo, we made it to Nelson. We're home, ya hear ? We're safe." Caius nudged the sleeping recruit, careful not to touch the needle in his arm. He didn't want Leo to be hungry when he wakes up. The recruit didn't stir, maybe Caius didn't bumped him hard enough ? The brunette tried again with a bit more strength, hoping to get a reaction from his friend. Maybe something was wrong ? Maybe he should go fetch Dusty ? But what if something happened while he was out ? He didn't even know where the Couriers decided to sleep. What if he left and took too much time looking around ? What if he came and Leo was dead ? What if he already was ? What if-

"Caius ! Caius, stop ! You're going to hurt him !"

The recruit jumped as Attila pulled him away from the bunk. He didn't even heard him leave his cot. "But he's not doing fine ! Look ! He's not waking up ! We need to find the Courier ! He needs help !" Barked the brunette grabbing the scout's shirt nervously.

"He's doing just fine ! He's sleeping like that because of the Med-X, he will wake up later !" Argued Attila hushing the youngest boy so he would stop yelling.

"But..."

"Look, he's breathing. You see ? You can take his pulse too. He's fine, Dusty wouldn't leave him alone if there was any danger for his health, you understand ?"

Caius pouted a little, he didn't like when Attila talked to him like that. It made him feel like he was an idiot. "Yeah, mate. I get it. I just— I'm scared. What if something happens while we sleep ?"

"Then we scream until someone arrives, Caius. Listen, let's just... go back to sleep, ok ?"

Caius nodded reluctantly, scrambling to get back on his feet, not before making sure Leo's chest was indeed moving. Attila led him to his bunk and shoved one of the fuzzy worms scattered around the recruit's cot between his hands. The brunette started toying with it immediately, slumping down his bed. The scout tried to leave but his friend caught his shirt once more. He was scared to see his friend leave him again but forever this time.

"Tilly. Can we talk a little, please ?"

The scout seemed taken aback by the request for a short time, accepting to sit by the youngest recruit's side. They both seemed uncomfortable, an odd distance between each other. "So..." Started Attila scratching the back of his neck awkwardly. "What did you want to talk about ?"

Caius swallowed audibly, his fingers pinching the pink toy between his fingers. "I... uh... Will you... Are you going to leave us ?"

"What ?" Strangled the spotted recruit at the blunt question, shaking his head like he had been shocked with a cattle prod.

"Are ya going to leave ? With the Couriers ? Not talking to us anymore ? Are ya going to go alone ?" Blurted Caius, clenching on his worm like a lifesaver, the questions rushing past his lips like the random words during his ticks. Attila tensed visibly near the brunette, staring down, his fingers digging in the fabric of his pants..

"Caius...I— I can't stay with the Legion. I never wanted to have anything to do with them. It's... It's not your fault, Caius, ok ? I want to stay your friend, I don't want to leave you alone but... I just
can't stay. I want to find my family back... " explained Attila trying to soothe the recruit now fully squishing the toy between his palms and biting his lower lip.

"B-But... The Legion is your family. The priestess always say we're all brothers ! That bloodline doesn't matter ! That the only thing that matter is the bonds we make with our brothers-in-arms !" Argued Caius struggling to persuade his friend to change his mind as tears started to well up in his eyes. Attila felt panicked climbing up his body, screaming and begging to run away from this confrontation and protect him in the same time.

"Caius... It's not that. It's not about just bloodline or... bonds... It's not about you, Caius. It's just... Listen, I-… I don't want to hurt you. I... I'll make sure you're safe ! I'll make sure you have a nice and safe place to stay ! And the others can help you too. I promise you can be happy without me, ok ?"

"But I don't want to be happy without ya ! You're my friend ! You're the only one that treats me right ! You're the only one I like that much ! You're my only friend, Tilly ! I don't want ya to leave !"

The brunette's words felt like a dog was chewing on his heart, like that ridiculous toy Caius was playing with was his guts being crushed and twisted painfully between his innocent fingers. "Caius, I... I don't want to leave you alone either. But I need to find my family... They matter to me. What they went through... It's unfair, I just... I need to make sure they are safe."

"I could help ya ! I could come with ya ! I promise I'll behave ! I promise I won' blink or tick at them ! I'll be nice, I swear !" Pleased the recruit, his dim emerald irises now drowned by the tears rolling down his cheeks. The sight tortured Attila cruelly, the feeling similar to long cold claws plunging inside his constricted chest.

"I can't... I can't take you with me... you're... Listen, you..." The words burnt inside his throat. *You're Legion*. That's what he wanted to say. Caius is Legion. He could never introduce him as a friend to his family. Especially after what they've been through, they would never accept it. No matter how kind-hearted Caius is, no matter how much he liked him. Caius is Legion. Even now they both deserted Caius would always be Legion. He would never admit the wrongs of the Legion. He could not. He could not.

"Why ? I promise to be nice ! I'll do everything ya tell me to do !"

"Caius ! I can't ! Please, just... stay with the others, they like you too ! You don't need me !"

"That's not true ! If ya leave I'll be all alone ! If you leave... I don' want ya to leave me ! Why ? Why can' I come with you ? Are ya not my friend ?" Pressed Caius now pulling on the ends of his worm, the material tensed to the extreme.

"Because you're Legion !" Blurted Attila grabbing the recruit's shoulders as the toy snapped in two parts in the brunette's hands. "That's why ! That's why I can't take you ! Because you're Legion. Because you will always be Legion... That's why I can't-… That's why I can't take you with me... Because you're Legion... Because I can't... I can't stay with the Legion anymore..."

Caius was frozen, the two bits of plastic squeezed in both his hands. A stream of salty water trickling down his chin and crashing on the floor, his whole body slowly went limp, his will to fight abandoning his muscles. "But... You are my friend..."

Attila pulled the unresisting recruit between his arms, hugging him tightly. "I know, Caius. You're my friend too. I wish I could... I wish there was a way... But I can't. I need to find my family... I'm
Sorry... you need to live without me... I'll send you letters, ok? You will still be my friend. Forever, ok?"

Caius sobbed against his chest. Not even ticking, totally devastated by the news but not trying to fight it. Accepting. He didn't want to force Attila to do anything he didn't want to do. He hated that. He hated to know Attila had to leave him behind. He let the spotted scout to hold him and rock him back and forth gently, refusing to admit his tears were mixing to those of the brunette.

If only you were not Legion.

If only you were born out of Legion.

If only you were just some enslaved boy like me.

If only I was strong enough to look past your history.

If only.
Dead Sea shifted on his bed, a thin ray of light pierced through the planks nailed to the window blinded him. Even the sun didn't want him to rest. Just like the phantom pain in his missing arm wasn't enough. The blond got up lazily, throwing the blankets back on the bed as he did. The bed was the most comfortable thing he slept on since the Battle of the Hoover Dam, and it annoyed him greatly to leave it so soon.

The blond moved towards the mirror near the bathroom's door, taking a look at his healed stub. It didn't look too bad. But it was quite grotesque to see the little, useless bit of arm moving around as he tried to take a look at it. He sighed quietly, letting go of the nub and taking a larger look of himself. A flock of new little scars, scattered on his left flank, biting through his skin. He sighed louder. He should have died.

And the one that inflicted them upon him was the one to save his life and was now their most precious ally. He cursed softly under his breath, turning over, facing the bed. Aurelius was sprawled on it. Shirtless. The covers only covering his legs. Show-off, thought Dead Sea as he licked his lips hungrily. Of course the Centurion was absolutely not conscious of his position or how much it aroused the Decanus, but show-off still. The two of them barely had any sort of intimacy since the Battle, and Dead Sea was craving to find himself in the strong embrace.

Dead Sea stealthily made his way towards the bed, crawling up the bigger body, very happy with himself when he found himself straddling the Centurion still sound asleep, propped on his right arm above him. He enjoyed the sight for a little while, the lithe musculature of the man underneath, the trail of dark hair peering out of his underwear all the way up to his navel, the few scars marking his tanned skin, and the light snore escaping for the slightly parted lips. Dead Sea smiled evilly, bending over to let his lips brush them tenderly, kissing the man lovingly, waiting for him to wake up.

Aurelius stirred under him, moaning softly, slowly waking up to the warmth of the kiss, too slowly. Dead Sea's grin grew wickedly, right before he sank his teeth in the Centurion's lower lip. Aurelius moaned loudly, jerked awake.

"Dead Sea ! What are you doing ?" Strangled Aurelius, wrapping his arms instinctively around the Decanus' soft body. Dead Sea smiled amusingly, giving the swollen lip a soothing lick before purring his answer.

"Waking you up. You're too slow"

Aurelius tried to work out an answer, quickly interrupted by Dead Sea peppering kisses along his neck. What escaped from his throat looked like the odd mix of a moan and a half-formed sentence, which didn't fail to amuse the Decanus. Aurelius exhaled slowly, trying to regain his composure as the assault on his neck became increasingly fierce to the point where the blond was now fully biting and sucking bruises down his neck.
The Centurion wrapped his arms around him, pulling him down until their two bodies flushed together, pressing their hardening shafts together. Aurelius hummed happily, one of his hand gripping the golden locks, not yet pulling but still here, then allowing the other hand to grope the smooth curves of the blond. Dead Sea sighed softly in the crook of the bigger man's neck, tickling the tortured flesh. Aurelius smiled knowingly, absently teasing every weak point of his lover's body, retaliating the assault on his neck with tender strokes, turning the blond into a shivering and whimpering mess.

Dead Sea struggled to get some composure back, opting for a sly bite on Aurelius' neck. The Centurion moaned in earnest, arching up against him. Dead Sea didn't let go until a purple hickey bloomed on his skin.

"You're mine, now." Growled the blond finally letting go of the bigger man.

"I was always yours, Dead. You can mark me all you want." Dead Sea pushed himself up, Aurelius' eyes were so dilated he looked high, his cheeks burning hot when Dead Sea kissed them softly. The Centurion licked his lips hungrily, his free hand slipping down the blond's spine and under the elastic of his underwear. The Decanus decided to grind down the bigger man's hips, resuming his kissing along Aurelius' neck, the Centurion pulled slightly harder on the blond hair, not enough to pull him off but putting him just at the edge of pain.

"I'm just so glad... So happy. Weeks ago I wouldn't have been able to claim you as mine this way... Now you're mine... You're mine... Just mine... Mine... Mine... Mine... Mine..."

Mouthing the blond attacking the Centurion's neck fervently. Aurelius moaned softly, pushing the fabric of Dead Sea's underwear, mapping the skin underneath fondly. The blond bit his way down the Centurion's collar, pausing a little longer when he reached the man's clavicle.

Aurelius let go of the blond's soft ass, groping the chubby sides he could still reach, massaging his nape with the other one, toying with the few curls falling down his neck. Dead Sea sighed softly, licking the firm pectoral in front of his nose, making his way down slowly, giving a languorous lick just above his nipple, making the bigger man keen softly. In the mood for teasing, the Decanus decided to seemingly ignore the nub, giving a feather-light bite right under it, earning a frustrated growl from the Centurion, the large hand on his neck coming back up to grab his hair again and pull him back up.

"Impatient." Purred Dead Sea, barely indulging the Centurion with a airy kiss, grinning when he felt the fingers curling harder in his blond hair. The Decanus hummed, amusingly, accepting to give in and licked it frankly, sucking the little bit between his lips, toying with it a few seconds until the Centurion let go of his hair before resuming his path. The blond found himself craving to finally reach the happy trail leading down the aching erection between the bigger man's legs.

Aurelius' breathing became laboured, gritting his teeth in anticipation, propping himself up on one elbow when Dead Sea knelt between his legs. Dead Sea moved up, struggling a few seconds to remove the garment with one hand before Aurelius helped him eagerly. Dead Sea tossed the underwear behind, gripping one of Aurelius' ankle, spreading his legs, taking a delighted look at the proud dick standing in the middle of a patch of dark curls. Aurelius noticed the staring, deciding to stretch indolently, moaning and spreading his legs, taking the breath away from the blond.

"Show off." Mocked Dead Sea slapping Aurelius' thigh playfully, deciding to kiss his way down the Centurion's leg, the man beneath waiting impatiently for the blond to reach his sensible cock.

The Decanus plunged his teeth in the hollow of his hip, leaving yet another mark on the Centurion's skin, his cheeks brushing so lightly the throbbing shaft. Aurelius twitched slightly, eye
riveted on the blond's lips slowly kissing their way towards his erection and moaned frankly when Dead Sea gave it a long lap.

"I barely started, Reily. Am I really having this effect on you?"

"Damnit! Of course you do!" Huffed the Centurion trying to get a hold of his accelerating feelings.

Between his legs Dead Sea was smiling knowingly, a wicked smile on his lips, his grin growing even larger when Aurelius cursed under his breath and shoved his hand in the golden hair, pushing the head down stubbornly. The Decanus accepted to indulge him, but only giving teasing kisses and licks turning the Centurion crazy. Dead Sea silently enjoyed the soft curses whimpered by the giant man, the tremor in his voice as his back arched up slightly, the grip on his locks becoming weaker each time the Decanus' lips or tongue landed on the burning cock.

Dead Sea keep torturing his Centurion lovingly for long seconds, keeping up until the Centurion was grasping the sheets with his free hand, the other one kneading the back of his head urgently. Dead Sea finally accepted to wrap his lips around the shaft, the big body keening under his ministrations. First he focused on the head, swirling his tongue around it, lapping the drop of precome pearling from the tip before taking more of the cock inside his mouth.

Aurelius moaned loudly, spreading his legs more, giving full access to the blessed mouth, Dead Sea bobbed his head slowly, much to Aurelius' despair, until the bigger man snapped and tried to push his head down. The Decanus stubbornly resisted, greatly amused by the other man's eagerness when the Centurion decided to buck hungrily. The blond would've have chuckled if his mouth wasn't full, the man beneath was completely lost in the heat fitting so nicely between the warm lips.

Dead Sea grinned and decided to give the man a show, now taking it all until his nose brushed the dark curls between his legs, making the Centurion gasp and squirm helplessly, the hand clenching on the blond's neck leaving it to grip the sheets like the other one. The Decanus struggled a little to find his balance so he could fondle with Aurelius' balls, earning indecently loud moans from him.

"Shit... Fuck... Dead... Dead... Haaa... Dead Sea...C'mere... Dead, c'mere." Called the Centurion slipping his hand under Dead Sea's jaw to push him off his dick. The blond obeyed and crawled back up until he was straddling the Centurion once again. Aurelius snatched his lips in a steamy kiss, pulling him against his burning body, hands groping feverishly whatever they could reach. Dead Sea moaned softly against the inquisitive lips, surprised when his lower lips was caught between the Centurion's, the bigger man sucking tenderly on the soft flesh, releasing it after a few seconds.

"Aurelius..." Whispered Dead Sea against his lips, losing himself in the embrace, letting his hand slip against his lover's cheek lovingly. The Centurion licked his lips, asking silently for his permission. Dead Sea smiled fondly, letting him invade his mouth. Their tongue danced together passionately, Aurelius' hands making their way down the tender back, reaching the annoying underwear and tugging it down with a groan.

"You're wearing too much." Hissed the Centurion groping the blond's covered ass.

"You're too thirsty." Mocked Dead Sea worming himself out of the garment with the bigger man's help.

"You're the one teasing." Countered Aurelius now fully enjoying the naked curves of his lover. Dead Sea hummed evasively, kissing the bigger man again. The Centurion gladly answered the
kiss, rolling the both of them on the mattress, laying Dead Sea on his back, himself kneeling between the blond's legs.

"Oh no, we switched places..." Chuckled Dead Sea amusingly, letting his valid arm map his lover's chest tenderly. "I'm at your mercy now."

"My, I wonder what will happen to you, then." Saying this words, Aurelius snaked his hand down to take a hold of Dead Sea's dick. The blond gasped loudly, all this time focusing on Aurelius made him forget how aching he was, his cock pulsing in the large hand. "And you call me the thirsty one."

Dead Sea tried to retort with a snarky remark only managing to mouth a loud incoherent moan, making Aurelius smile devilishly. Curse this man. Curse this deep voice. Curse this talented hand running up and down his sore shaft. Curse the velvet brush of the tender lips along his exposed neck, shooting sparkles of arousal running through his entire being. Curse this profound chuckle coming from the man as he watched him lose it in seconds, with the same intensity felt by the Centurion before. The Decanus foolishly tried to regain control of himself, grasping the sheets, biting his lower lip, trying to cool down the burn of his own blood rushing bubbling inside his needy body.

He wouldn't hold back for long, he's been waiting for long enough. Aurelius said something but Dead Sea didn't hear, didn't care. The blond gasped, letting out a vulgar moan out, arching up when the bigger man shifted so both their cocks could brush, pressing the two of them in the tunnel of his hand. The blond fumbled blindly to wrap his own fingers around Aurelius'.

The Centurion was raking himself up over the round and tender body in earnest now, bucking inside their joined palms. He crushed his lips against his lover's mouth, shoving his tongue inside urgently. Dead Sea moaned against the inquisitive lips, aroused senseless by the brushing of their skins and the skilful hand massaging his erection. Aurelius' dick was still damped by the Decanus' previous ministrations and smears of precome making both their shafts glide up and down more easily.

Dead Sea wrapped his legs around Aurelius' waist, trapping the bigger man against him. The both of them moving in harmony, breathing heavily, trembling together, close to their climax. Aurelius broke the kiss to inhale deeply, under him Dead Sea squirmed weakly, tears of pleasure welling up his blue eyes. The Decanus scolded himself for such a display of weakness. Aurelius immediately spotted them and licked them clean clumsily.

"I'm almost there... I can't... hold out for long... Dead... It's so good..."

"Not yet..." Plead the blond in a whine, not wanting it to end just now. "Just a little longer... please... don't stop... Not yet... Not yet... Reily... please..."

Aurelius groaned, rutting erratically above the smaller body. Dead Sea felt crushed under the burning weight, crushed but safe, sheltered, protected... loved. Aurelius peppered urgent kisses in the crook of his neck, strangled whines escaping the pressing lips. The Decanus tightened the grip of his legs around the Centurion, whimpering at the frustration he felt at the loss of his arm, preventing him from holding his lover closer to his body, like it was even possible.

They could both feel their bodies melt against each others, heat taking over everything else. Dead Sea could feel the dizziness overwhelm him, blinding him with delirious pleasure, he could barely hear Aurelius grunting above him. He tried to press Aurelius' hand harder, but he was too weak to put any strength in it. Aurelius growled dangerously, planting his fangs in the crook of his neck.
The Decanus finally gave up, letting a wave of pleasure take over him, Dead Sea yelped, arching up under Aurelius, cum wetting their rubbing stomachs, Aurelius following quickly after, crashing on the smaller body.

The both of them stayed like that for a long minute, out of breath, limbs tangled together, their bodies covered in damp semen, before Dead Sea started to push the heavy weight away from his chest.

"I can't breath, Reily." Groaned the blond half-heartedly, pushing his lover weakly with his only arm. Aurelius chuckled rolling onto his side, allowing the smaller man to inhale deeply, watching him as the blond wiped the sticky fluid from his body with mild disgust, a serene smile on his face.

"I love you, Dead." Whispered the Centurion fondly.

Dead Sea paused his lazy cleaning before turning to face his lover, meeting the patient eyes of Aurelius, knowing he was not lying.

"I love you too, idiot."

Attila drooled on the edge of Caius' bunk. After the previous night's discussion he stayed by his friend's side, holding his hand, waiting for him to fall asleep. Trying to comfort him. Tell him things will be fine. That he will still send him letters, not forget him. They are still friends. Will always be. It took nearly an hour for Caius to finally pass out. And Attila didn't have the heart to leave his side after that. Watching his friend snore softly until falling asleep himself.

His arm slipped by the edge of the cot and his while body crashed on the ground with a yelp. Startling Caius awake in the process.

"Careful, child. You'll hurt your back sleeping like this." Chirped a voice near the barrack's door. Attila jumped on his feet clumsily, his entire body sore and aching from his bad position. Dusty was sitting near Leo's bed calmly, changing the IV on his arm and changing the bandages around his wound. "Maybe you should stretch, children. I brought the two of you some food, your friend should wake up in a few hours that would be good if one of you lads was here when he wakes up. Don't give him any solid food, no matter how much he asks, if it's really bothering you come to me, ok ?" She instructed all while finishing her work, not minding two surprised recruits looking at her with big, round eyes.

The ginger put the blankets back on Leo, tucking him neatly. She then pulled up her bag and handed them snacks as a breakfast. "Domi made some coffee and juice outside, you should grab some now if you want. You should all take a day off, don't worry Domi and I will handle the guard."

Caius had already started nodding and shoving cakes in his mouth, still groggy by the last night's crackup. The brunette was staring at the ground sadly, not saying a word. Attila felt guilty for his mopping but it was necessary. He had to convince Caius to let go and the sooner he would accept the idea the better it will be. Dusty seemed to notice the heavy atmosphere floating around but didn't comment on it, simply humming pensively and leaving quietly.

Attila ate a couple of cakes in silence, avoiding to look at Caius. He swore they would still be friends but their discussion clearly wounded the two of them.

"Hum... I'll go get some coffee. Want to come with me or you stay with Leo ?" Offered the scout
fumbling with the Dandy Boy Sweet Cakes box. Caius didn't answered right away, looking up at their friend.

"I'll go with ya, Tilly. Then we can watch Leo together, right ?" Caius' smile looked forced but Attila was relieved nonetheless.

"Yeah, we can do that." Accepted the scout with a friendly nod.

The two of them left their snacks behind and left the barracks. Caius had shoved one of his caps on his head, leaving in his toga while Attila still had his pants and shirt from the day before. The scout started to long for a shower or a bath, wishing he could get rid of the stench of blood and sweat clinging to his skin.

Caius greeted the dog still guarding their barracks. The animal's tail wagged when the two boys came near, Attila remained at a safe distance while the brunette petted the animal excitedly. "You see, Tilly ? Doggy's still here ! I think the dog likes me !" Chirped the recruit happily as the mongrel licked his face enthusiastically, glad to see the legionary that fed them and offered them his own water.

"Maybe you could keep it then ? They seem to like you." Noted Attila reluctantly. Caius will need someone or something by his side should he leave. A dog could be a good distraction.

"You think I can, Tilly ? That would be so great ! And what ya think, doggy ? Ya want to come with me ?" Tweeted Caius, scratching behind the black hound's ears, delighted when the beast barked and licked his face once again. "Tilly, the dog needs a name ! I don' know how their previous master called 'em. I need a new one."

"Pff... I don't know, is it a he or a she ?" "Does it matter ? I just need a name that fits, mate."

"I don't know, Caius, name it like something you like then." Retorted Attila still standing far away from the animal. He still felt his chest warm at the sight of Caius sitting in the dirt, hugging and laughing with the mongrel all while humming pensively between two bursts of laughter following the excited animal's licks.

"Liquorice !" Yapped Caius suddenly. Tick. The dog must be scaring Caius ! Ignoring his fear of the Legion mongrels, Attila jumped at the recruit's side, trying to hold the dog away.

"Caius ! Are you alright ?"

"Yeah, mate. I'm fine. What's wrong ? Somethin' happened ?" Asked the confused recruit, wondering why his friend suddenly panicked.

"You ticked ! I thought you got scared !" Explained clarified the spotted boy, ignoring the hound huffing its annoyance too close of his neck. Caius looked at Attila with wide eyes before howling in laughter, falling in the dust, holding his ribs as he kept screeching happily. "What's so funny, Caius ? I was scared you know !"

"That's the dog's name ! I called 'em Liquorice ! I wasn' ticking, mate. Just naming the doggy."

"...Oh."

"Ya were scared about me, Tilly ? That's so funny !" Squeaked Caius offering his largest smile. Attila felt himself blushing in embarrassment, looking away from the laughing recruit. "It's ok,
"Yeah, yeah. Well take 'Liquorice' and let's get coffee." Mumbled the spotted scout helping Caius back on his feet. The two boys and the dog then walked towards the fireplace Domitius and Dusty improvised probably during the night. Dusty greeted cheerfully them and told them to sit somewhere around.

It wasn't long now. Soon, they would reach the safe borders of Vegas under the couriers protection. Leo was getting stronger everyday, as was Caius. Though unsure for Dead Sea and Aurelius, Attila knew as long as they had each other, nobody stood a chance against them both. As for himself? Soon he would see his family again and the nightmare would finally, finally end.
Chapter Summary

Comes back after months of not updating smelling like coffin and worms "Heyyy~"

Aurelius rose from the bed reluctantly, fumbling on the ground to find his undergarment his lover tossed away earlier. Dead Sea was back at snoring softly in the pillows after their steamy embrace. The Centurion tucked him gently, careful not to wake him up. The Decanus always had trouble falling asleep and with everything he went through he deserved the rest. Aurelius sighed softly, fondling with the blond hair gently, he loved him so much, he only wanted him to be happy and safe. The Couriers may not have been the brightest idea at the time but now, with the Frumentarii hunting them down for treason, they offered the only visible exit.

His stomach growled suddenly, reminding him he forgot to dine last night and craved to be fed. The Centurion grumbled and got up. He looked at the folded clothes on the chair near the bed and his face scrounged up immediately.

The prospect to put the trousers on once more didn't please him. The piece of fabric made him feel so uncomfortable. How did Profligates accept to put up with this everyday and dare criticise the Legion's togas ? Barbaric. But on the other hand he knew there wasn't a single tunic his size in this camp. He groaned under his breath and slipped the insulting set of clothing on. Absolutely barbaric.

Aurelius then slipped his shirt on and walked quietly towards the door. Careful not to bump into anything on his way out. The sun blinded him a second when he opened the door. Then the camp appeared to him. Empty if not for the little group taking their breakfast together. Caius was wearing one of his toga and Aurelius envied him secretly for having clothing his size here. But Attila was not, the scout was trying to drink a black coffee despite his evident distaste for the beverage. The spotted recruit had opted for his previous gear, minus the leather jacket he probably left in the barracks.

It pained the Centurion to admit it but Attila was probably right to wear his Profligate disguise. They couldn't afford to be spotted anymore. He would probably scold the other recruit gently to make sure he wouldn't go around in Legion gear or speaking of the Legion when they were trying to blend in. The brunette recruit noticed him making his way toward their group and waved enthusiastically. Aurelius then noticed the black dog laying at his feet.

"Ave Centurion Aurelius !" Greeted Caius with a cheerful smile.

"Hush ! Don't scream that ! No one is supposed to know we're Legion." Scolded the Centurion hushing the recruit.

"Oh... sorry... uh... sir ?" Mumbled the youngest recruit sadly, Aurelius finally walked close enough to notice that the brunette didn't seem to have a good night of sleep, heavy bags hanging under his eyes and red veins visible in them.
"Call me Aurie, would you? It's safer than flashing a Legion name around..." Answered the Centurion rubbing the kid's head gently, making it clear that he wasn't mad at him. "Nice hat you have here, recru-... kid. You had this one laying around?"

"Aye! I collect 'em! I have plenty in my trunk!" Chirped Caius delighted that the Centurion noticed his headgear.

"Well... that's good. And the dog? You want to keep him?"

"Her." Blurted Caius with a calm smile.

"Excuse-me?" Asked the bigger man wondering if it was another one of the recruit's quirks.

"Lady Dusty told me it's a she. Tilly and I called her Liquorice." Explained the child scratching the mongrel's head. "She's such a nice girl, she's followin' us everywhere now."

Aurelius nodded politely, letting the brunette busy itself with the animal as he made his way towards the two Couriers. Domitius poured a cup of black coffee and handed it to the Centurion in silence. Aurelius accepted it quietly. The ex-Decanus and him needed to talk about a few things while they were here.

"What's our plan, Domitius? We can't move from camp to camp like squatters until someone finally reveals our identity."

The ex-Decanus looked up to the Centurion. They both looked nothing like the men they knew a few years ago. Domitius' eyes lost nothing of their glow but the light wasn't as menacing as before, the threat still hung around, but there was a feeling of calmness surrounding him instead. Like the eye of the storm. Aurelius on the other hand seemed to have lost half of his volume, tired, older.

"We're bringing you to New Vegas, you'll be safe there. Until we get rid of the Frumentarii."

"Get rid of the Frumentarii? Did you hit your head somewhere at the Hoover Dam? We don't get rid of the Frumentarii!" Roared Aurelius exasperated. Domitius simply rose an eyebrow, this was new to him too, this expression. The Domitius he knew only showed barely veiled anger or eagerness, this one was mostly showing a strange serenity and a general feeling of lassitude.

"Dusty and I already got rid of them before. We will again." Simply retorted the black man patiently.

"You... you got rid of the Frumentarii? What do you mean?"

"Did you think they let me go when they noticed my body was not... That I wasn't dead. They chased Dusty and I for a few months before giving up." Started Domitius shoving a pill between his teeth in the middle of his sentence. "No matter what they tell you. They won't waste their resources if they know they can't win the fight."

"But... the Frumentarii... The Legion never lets go of traitors! They... they told me you were dead... They must have thought you died!"

"Once again, if they thought I was why did they sent Frumentarii to hunt me down?" Asked Domitius patiently. "They lie a lot. It doesn't matter if they lie to a recruit or a Centurion. They will grow tired. I assure you."
Aurelius didn't answer. He knew the two recruits had stopped eating and stared at him silently, they were looking up to him, he was their leader, even if he was not in the Legion anymore he was still responsible for their well-being. He didn't know what to tell him, what to tell them. He needed help. he needed someone to offer him a solution, a possible escape.

Dusty came towards him with her mouth half-full with breakfast food an amused smile on her face. Aurelius face enlightened slightly, expecting her to give him a hand or some helpful advice.

"What's on your neck, big boy ? You got mauled by a wild dog in your sleep ?" The smile left his face instantly. What ? "The purple marks on your neck ? How did you got them ? You hurt yourself ?"

"Uh...I... slept... funny ?" Tried Aurelius not willing to admit Dead Sea was the one responsible for the hickeys.

"Really ? That doesn't look like that. Looks like something bit you. or Scurvy. You eat correctly in the Legion ?" Kept jesting the ginger with a knowing smile. Gremlin. She was doing this on purpose he was sure of it.

"Listen, it's... it's not Scurvy. It's... you know what it is. It's not Scurvy." Tried the Centurion, hoping the Courier would leave him alone. But of course the distraction was too entertaining to pass by.

"Are you sure ? What is it then ? I don't know a single thing capable of making such damage that's not Scurvy. So what is responsible for it ? You said you know so what is it ? Are we all in danger ?"

The Centurion glared daggers at her, even more flustered when he heard Caius ask Attila if he was sick and the spotted recruit shushing him and telling he shouldn't bother with it. The scout clearly guessed from where the hickeys came from and wished to preserve his friend's innocence. Domitius himself was looking away, embarrassed.

"Yes, Aurelius. Tell us from where the marks come from. I'm burning to know." Chuckled a familiar voice behind him. Aurelius turned to face his lover, the man was smiling amusingly, perfectly knowing what caused the marks since he was guilty for inflicting them upon his neck. Dead was stunning, beautiful. Not fully awakened yet, hair and clothes dishevelled, he had left the duster in the barracks but still wore his shirt and jeans. Aurelius had to admit the clothes suited him just fine, but anything would suit the Decanus.

"Are you all going to team up on me ? What have I done to deserve such a treatment ?" Pouted the Centurion choosing to sip his coffee instead of answering.

"Teaming up on you ? How unfair. We only worry about your health. I'm also concerned that the man I'm sharing my bed with may be wounded." Purred the blond brushing the Centurion's cheek lovingly. Aurelius blushed madly. Dead Sea never behaved bluntly like that about their relation, always hiding, always scolding him when he got too chummy anywhere that wasn't surrounded by four walls and closed doors.

"See ! Even your cutie pie wants to know !" Chirped Dusty punching the bigger man's arm gently. "Tell us, c'mon ! We're dying to know !"
"My 'cutie pie' and yourself perfectly know what the marks are. Stop pushing me around."
Mumbled Aurelius wrapping both his arms around his mocking lover's waist.

"Do I now? Just tell me again, Reily. I may have forgotten." Teased the blond stroking gently the short, cropped, black hair with the tip of his fingers.

"I knocked my neck on something."

"On what? I'm curious." Purred the Decanus pressing himself against the bigger man's body, enjoying how nicely they fitted.

"Your lips, Love. And some of your teeth too." Whispered the Centurion stealing a swift kiss from the blond, delighted when he felt Dead Sea's arm wrapping around his neck.

"But he must have knocked himself very hard to get a big purple mark like that, innit? And several times... And why isn't Decanus Dead Sea hurt too? Tilly, if he hit Centurion Aurelius like that he should be hurt too, innit?" Whispered Caius to Attila who must feel very hot since he was red from head to toe.

"Forget about it, Caius. It's not important." mumbled Attila, hiding his face behind his cup of bitter coffee.

"But-"

"Forget about it, Caius. It's better for the both of us."

Caius happily scratched his mongrel's belly, the animal seemed overjoyed to have a friend to care for her after this entire week of loneliness. She was still skinny because of her diet but Caius would make sure she would get some flesh on her bones. Attila was busy chatting with the Couriers. Talking about his family. Caius pretended he didn't hear. That he wasn't listening the detailed description of his two sisters and his mother.

Caius wanted to be happy for Attila. He wanted to rejoiced to see Attila and his family getting back together, but he couldn't. Attila going back to his family meant he would leave him alone and Caius didn't like that. He didn't want Attila to leave him. Even if the scout promised to write him letters all the time. At least he had Liquorice now. The dog wouldn't leave him, innit? Dogs never left their masters.

The black mongrel suddenly got back on her paws, alert, barked three times and ran away.

Caius felt his heart constrict painfully even the dog didn't want him around. He heard her barking not far away. He looked up to see Liquorice waiting for him near one of the houses, barking at him, waiting for him. She didn't ran away. Maybe she just wanted to play? The recruit jumped on his feet and ran after the dog.

The mongrel led him towards the border of the camp before she starting barking once again, and growling at a screeching post on top of that.
"What's wrong, Liquorice? You spotted somethin'?" Caius petted the mongrel's head, looking up to see what the dog had spotted. The brunette moved the visor of his cap out of the view to see what was on top of it. It was a bird, a bird of prey with long wings spotted with white feathers. He recognised the falcon immediately. "Tilly! Tilly, it's Mirage! Tilly, your bird is 'ere!"

The scout was quick to join him, looking up, hissing when he got blinded by the sun. "Caius hold your dog back! She's scaring her!" Yelled Attila gesturing at the dog. Caius wrapped his arms around Liquorice's neck, trying to calm the dog as much as he could. "Wait for me here, Caius. I need my glove! Make sure she doesn't get hurt, ok?"

Caius watched his friend run away towards the barracks. Liquorice still occasionally barked at the bird which answered with long annoyed screeches. Mirage didn't seem really scared by the dog, knowing perfectly she was safe on top of her post but the falcon still didn't like being barked at. Caius struggled to soothe the mongrel still barking at the bird with her fangs barred.

"Need help with your pet, child?" Purred Dusty trotting towards him.

"Uh... No, it's fine! I just-... down, Liquorice!... She just needs to calm down a bit."

"That I can see. Mind if I try?" Chirped the ginger coming closer to them. Caius looked at the mongrel, ashamed by his lack of experience with dogs and his inability to tame her. He nodded and Dusty simply crouched in front of the dog, catching her muzzle very calmly and keeping her mouth shut. "Down, pup. Look at you, you're embarrassing your master. Be a good pet and do what he says now."

Caius looked at her in awe as the animal whined shamefully and stopped her tantrum. Dusty waited for the hound to lay down before letting go of her muzzle, petting the top of the rough head with a satisfied smile.

"There! Good girl! If you need help with your puppy come at me, child, ok? Raising a dog is a big responsibility, I'm proud of you for taking it."

Caius felt his chest swell with delight. He couldn't remember a single time someone told him they were proud of his accomplishments. "Thanks. I'll try my best." Mumbled the recruit trying to hide his blushing. Legionaries were not supposed to be blushing. The others said blushing was a girl thing. Not something worth of the Legion. But the Courier was not Legion and just patted his back with a large grin and called him a good kid before going back to the fireplace. Caius just watched her leave all while fumbling awkwardly with the dog's fur. Maybe he could make it. If he stayed with the Couriers. With Liquorice and them. Maybe Attila's absence wouldn't be as painful.

"Ah, you managed to calm the dog, good!" Heaved Attila behind him. The scout was finally back with a thick leather glove on his hand. Caius just smiled back to his friend. The idea of him leaving wounded him once again. Maybe it wouldn't be that easy.

Dead Sea stretched lazily under the covers. Both him and Aurelius were back inside, enjoying the calm of the place and the softness of their bed. They were both exhausted, from their wounds, from their long walk yesterday, from all the late events. They were traitors. They was no more running
away from it. But here in this house they spent so much time together in they could pretend nothing had changed.

They had once again stripped down and crashed together on the bed. After longing kisses and loving caresses they were now cuddling silently. Only the quiet hush of the wind disturbed the peace of this morning. The Couriers were guarding the camp. They were safe. They were together and the NCR was no concern of them anymore. Still their peace had an unpleasant, bittersweet taste.

Dead Sea pushed it back in a corner of his mind, he didn't want to dally on obscure worries when he was enjoying the warm embrace of his lover. He focused on the soft feeling of Aurelius’ skin under his fingers. The pads trailed gently from on scar to another. The bullet mark in his shoulder, the long reminders of his meetings with other machetes or combat knives, the irregular patterns made by the stitches of the Legion healers. Dead Sea had to admit the stitches he got from Dusty were much cleaner.

The thought irritated the Decanus that scrapped his nails against a long cicatrice making the sleepy man growl and take the aggressive hand away.

"What's wrong, Love ? Can't sleep ?" Asked the Centurion pressing a gentle kiss on his palm, trying to soothe his lover.

"Nothing. I'm just tired." Eluded the blond making himself more comfortable against the bigger man's chest, Aurelius kissed his forehead in answer going back to his sated rest. Dead Sea pulled his hand out of Aurelius' grip and resumed his mapping of his body, careful to avoid the not fully healed bullet wounds on his shoulder.

It almost looked like nothing had changed. That some recruit would knock on the door to make their report, that a runner would bring a message for Aurelius making it clear that the Centurion was needed somewhere else and thus that his time here has come to an end. But no one would come. Not anymore. They were alone. Far from the Legion and the rules that forced them to hide. But also away from everything else that made them whole.

All this turmoil was getting on his nerves. More than usual that is.

"What is wrong, Love. I can feel you're nervous." Mumbled Aurelius petting his blond hair tenderly. Of course he would, Aurelius knew him better than himself sometimes.

"Nothing will be the same, isn't it ?" Aurelius didn't reply, pausing his comforting petting, looking for words that wouldn't come. "Even if we find a safe place. It will never be the same again, isn't it ?"

"I don't know. I never... I never thought about what we could do should we join the Profligates. Never thought it would actually happen. I just..." The Centurion paused and Dead Sea could feel the arm around his waist tighten its anxious grip on his body. "I just hoped that Lanius would get killed during the Hoover Dam Battle and the next Legate would be more lax about his laws concerning laying with another soldier."

"And if that failed ?"

"I would have kidnapped you in the dark of the night and ran away with you."
The Decanus chuckled and gave the Centurion a playful slap on the nose. "That's a stupid plan, Reily." The two of them remained silent a few more minutes, Aurelius was once again giving his blond hair gentle strokes. "Who do you think took Caesar's place?"

"I don't know, Dead. I guess it should fall upon Lucius, but he was so lost after Caesar's death I suspect he might refuse to take the throne. Maybe Vulpes? Do you think Vulpes would take the role?"

The smaller man took a few seconds of thinking before answering. "I think he could, but not if Lucius is in the way. He's legitimate since he's the leader of the Frumentarii after all."

"Do you think either him or Lucius would accept having us back?" Aurelius' voice was heavy, heavier than Dead Sea would have expected. The blond propped himself up on his right arm, staring at the laying Centurion. The bigger man did not look at him, eyes riveted on the ceiling. Has Aurelius been this concerned all the time? Maybe he didn't show any of it so he wouldn't worry.

"I don't know, Reily... Maybe Lucius would he was always all over the spare resources thing. Vulpes... Vulpes wouldn't. He hates traitors more than anything. He would send Frumentarii hit squads to swoop up whoever left... He's... complicated." The two men remained silent for long minutes, unmoving, both curled against each others. The minutes got longer as they focused on the sound of their breathing. "What are we going to do, now?"

"I don't know. I only know how to fight but don't think I could be a mercenary or bodyguard. Not enough discipline. Do you think the Couriers will put up an army to defend New Vegas? We can't be sure so what is left? Shop owner? I have no idea how it works. Healer? I don't know either. I don't know Dead Sea... maybe become a farmer of sorts? I doesn't seem to complicated to me. But do you really picture me as a farmer?"

Dead Sea could see it perfectly, Aurelius in those ridiculous slacks the lowlifes wore here, a hoe on his shoulder and speaking with this ridiculous slang. The Decanus howled in laughter, rolling away from his lover, nearly falling off the bed.

"Careful, Dead! What's making you laugh so hard?" Barked the Centurion grabbing him before he slipped over the edge of the bunk.

Dead Sea hiccoughed a few more second, struggling to get a hold of his hilarity before he managed to wheeze something out. "Try to say 'howdy'."

Aurelius smiled fondly at his giggling lover before he decided to indulge him. "Howdy." Imitated the Centurion with the nosy voice tipping and imaginary hat, the blond howled in laughter again as the bigger man pulled him closer chuckling and pressing loving kisses on the top of his head. "If the idea amuses you so much maybe I should consider the idea seriously."

"Please don't!*giggles* I would die within a day!" Cackled the Decanus nestling against the large
A peaceful smile stretched on Aurelius' lips. Yes they could. He believed in the both of them. He wrapped his arms around Dead Sea's round form and rolled them over, trapping the both of them in the blankets and kissed him languorously. "As long as we are together, love. I promise. We can make it."

Caius stumbled in the barracks loudly, shushed by Attila right after the burst. Leo was still asleep after all. Dusty and Domitius had relieved them of guard duty so they could check on Leo and be there for his awakening. Liquorice remained outside despite Caius trying to beckon her closer. The mongrel has been taught the barracks were not for dogs and she clearly intended it to stay that way, much to Attila's relief. Sadly for him Mirage also had to stay outside. The bird was safe on her spot on the roof but he didn't like to have her away after all this time being separated. She was the closest thing he had left of his family after all.

Leo was still unconscious on his cot, mumbling things in his slumber. No doubt he was about to wake up. Caius slumped down next to the sleeping recruit and stared at him like he did the previous day. Attila almost expected him to poke the sleeping recruit but the brunette didn't. Instead staring at him intensely.

The IV on Leo's arm has been changed and kept dripping quietly in the recruit's veins.

"Tilly, how long do ya think it will take for him to wake up ?' Asked Caius looking up to his friend.

The scout shrugged and slumped next to the other recruit. "I don't know, Caius. We just have to wait, it shouldn't take long."

"Do you think he's gonna be scared ? We moved from Boulder City to here and he didn' woke up since..."

"I don't know, Caius. Probably. He's been unconscious for two days and he's going to wake up with a hole in his stomach that can't be easy." Answered Attila flatly. Caius nodded with a smile and went back to staring at Leo.

Attila swallowed back a defeated sigh. He could feel his mood drop once again. He wanted to go out and throw up, everything in his body felt wrong, misshaped, grotesque, unfitting. He wished he could shape his own flesh until it matched his mind. He hated this. He hated this. He hated everything but mostly his contradicting body. He wanted to run away or lay on the floor and cry until he fell asleep. Ironically, he felt glad the Legion taught him to hide his feelings but he hated that he actually learned something useful from them.

"Are ya ok, mate ? You're bein' weird."
Attila scolded himself for not hiding his annoying mood swing. He hated this. He hated this so much. It must be withdrawal, it was obviously withdrawal. It's been two months since his last T-shot and mood swings became more and more frequent. Before he could blame it on the stress of the upcoming battle but now it was impossible to hide. Maybe Dusty could help him. She had medical knowledge she probably knew how to get those things. But he also dreaded to ask her about such a personal problem without knowing her opinions on the matter but he couldn't stand it anymore. However he couldn't tell Caius. He's from the Legion he wouldn't understand. "It's okay, Caius. I'm just... tired."

"Ya wanna take a nap, Tilly ? I could watch over Leo by myself." Offered the brunette sheepishly. The scout smiled sadly. A nap would not help, Attila even doubted it could help him. Attila. It wasn't his name.

"Caius... Can I ask you something ?" Inquired the spotted recruit warily.

"Sure, mate !" Chirped the other recruit happily. Caius has always been so accepting, maybe it would not bother him.

"Could you call me Essex ? This was my name before the Legion, I would like you to call me that instead of Attila."

Caius looked at him with big round eyes and a confused smile on his lips. "What do you mean, mate ? Attila is not your name ?"

"No it's not. It's the name they gave me when they captured me. My real name is Essex. Could you call me that, please ?"

"Uh... I guess..." The recruit over articulated, like he was trying to come around the idea. Attila wasn't supposed to be Attila anymore, he was supposed to be 'Essex'. Odd.

"Thank you, Caius. It means a lot to me."

"No problem, mate... uh... Essex... uh... It doesn't sound like a Legion name..." Mumbled the brunette scratching the back of his head.

Essex gritted his teeth, of course it couldn't be that easy. "Because it is not a Legion name. It is the name my mom gave me."

Caius hummed to himself and repeated the name several times. "Alright... Essex. I'll do my best."

End Notes

If you wish to find me I'm on tumblr here : truenekosama.tumblr.com
This story has been written with the user : Dhole whom OCs I stole, Attila, Caius, and Leo belong to them.
This work is sequel to Dhole's 'Say I look nice (When I'm not)'

Thanks for reading, leave your reviews, kudos, and feel free to tell me if you spot any typo
or grammar mistake :)

Please drop by the archive and comment to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!