

Wasteland Claims
Part 4
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By Draconicon

Spencer half-expected the next morning to begin with a mouth on his cock, but it seemed that the shyness of his new mechanic extended to playing with someone while they were asleep and couldn't judge her. She would have to get over that at some point, but he hoped that it would be sooner than later. He didn't want to force her like the raiders, and while he didn't mind playing up the 'slave' angle when they were playing around, he didn't want her to get used to being told what to do all the time. That would just get her killed if she was ever to leave him.

Then again, that's something that some people would use for bargaining, he thought, shaking his head as he opened his eyes.

The morning sun was pouring through the holes of the roof, and Taffington Boathouse had never looked uglier. He groaned under his breath as he looked at the shredded bits of wood everywhere, the holes in the wall, the half-working appliances against the wall, the fact that they were sleeping in a moldy room because it was still better than the alternative. It was a mess, and emblematic of everything that was wrong with the Wasteland.

Well...time to get back to fixing that...

Spencer rolled to his side, getting his legs off the bed and leaning forward. His morning wood bumped against his belly, the tip sliding along his scales for a moment as he stretched down to his ankles, and then sat up again. It twitched again when he heard his mechanic groaning behind him.

Looking over his shoulder, he chuckled at the sight of Nic rolling over, her eyes slowly opening and looking up at him.

“Sleep well?”

“No.”

“What's the matter?”

“That...thing...”

She pointed at his cock, and he chuckled. He turned slowly, letting it pop back into view, and no sooner had it done so than she ducked her head into her pillow again.

“Not here...”

“The more you do that, the longer it’s going to take to tempt me to use you again, you know?”

“I know! But it’s hard, okay?”

“So’s my dick.”

“Fuck off.”

“You want to spend the day here instead of going back down the Vault?”

He wasn’t asking to be sarcastic, but rather to keep them both focused. Last time, she had kept her attention split between him and the different devices and gadgets that were down in the depths of Vault 98. She had even admitted that she would have jumped his bones down there if it had been even slightly less creepy, and while that was flattering, it wasn’t something that made for effective scrounging. Besides, she could use that time to start getting the defenses better, maybe get the walls repaired with some of the spare materials that they had.

Yet, when he made the offer, she immediately lifted her head off the pillow, staring at him like he had just said something insulting. The reptile arched an eyebrow.

“What?”

“You...you don’t want me around?”

“That’s not what I said.”

“You asked if I wanted to stay here. I thought...didn’t we do okay last time?”

“Oh, boy, here we go...”

“What? What did I do?”

“Ugh. Look.”

He turned around the rest of the way, crossing his legs and sitting with his feet under his knees. The position wasn’t the most comfortable, considering it also left him with his tail being pinned against his butt, but it was about as good as he was going to get.

“Listen to me, okay? Me asking you if you want to stay here by yourself doesn’t mean I’m leaving you behind. Got that?”

“...”

“Got that?”

“I guess, but you -”

“Stop.” He held a finger to her lips until her mouth stopped moving. “No. I’m not asking you for reasons or explanations right now. That can wait until tonight. What’s going to happen right now is that I’m going to lay out your options, and you’re going to pick one. Understand?”

“But why -”

“No. That’s not what I asked. Do you understand what you have to do?”

“But -”

“Nic?”

“...I understand.”

“Good.”

He nodded, leaning forward and patting her on the head. For all that she was a tough mechanic, she was still someone that needed the reassurance, and more, obviously. As she nuzzled up into his hand, almost like a cat, he sighed. This was going to get rather complicated.

“Okay, here’s the options. One. You can come with me back into the creepy vault and see all the dead bodies and everything. That would help me carry more back to the Boathouse, but considering we stripped it of most of the complicated and valuable stuff already, I don’t think that I’ll need your help identifying the right ones to bring back. You agree?”

“...Probably, yeah.”

“Two. You can stay here and start putting the defenses together. We could use a base around here, and this is as good as any if we can make sure that we’ve got some defenses ready. That, and repair the house a bit.”

“You trying to turn me into your handyman?”

“Handy-woman, actually, but yes. You wanted a job, and that’s what’s available.”

He could tell that she didn’t like being told that, but he knew that it was important to nail this down, too. Much as he needed someone with mechanical knowledge, he needed someone

that didn't need to be looked after too often. She had been surviving in the Wasteland on her own for some time, obviously, but as soon as the two of them started talking and fucking, she seemed to be all too willing to start throwing herself under his control rather than remaining independent. It wasn't a good sign, but he was willing to give her a chance to start proving that it was just a mistaken first impression.

He leaned back on one arm, looking her in the eye.

"So, what's it going to be?"

"..." She sighed. "I guess two, but you're mean."

"Heh, why do you say that?"

"I wanted to talk it out, and...I don't know. I thought we could..."

"We'll talk it out tonight when I get back. Just make sure that you're still here, okay?"

"I can do that. Just...don't leave me here. Don't leave me behind."

"I won't."

He patted her head again, then dragged himself out of bed. His tail ached slightly as he got up, but as he moved it from side to side, it started to feel better. With blood flow restored, he grabbed his laser rifle leaning against the wall, threw the strap over his arm, and then made his way to the stairs.

"You're not even staying for breakfast?" she asked.

"Nope. Gotta get going if I'm going to clear this today."

"You..."

She sighed, and he knew that she was finally getting the point. While he needed her to understand that he wasn't going to just turn her life around, that he wasn't going to just give her the dicking and mastery that she wanted, he hated having to be cruel about it. He just hoped that she was going to be alright with being alone for the day. It wasn't always easy for someone to go back to that.

Still, he wasted no time, and he didn't look back until he was well down the road, and even then, he kept walking as he did. Nic was just starting to leave the house, and she had her tools in hand.

Good girl, he thought, and turned to keep walking.

#

Returning to the gates of Vault 98, Spencer was just about to open the door to the Vault when he heard the sounds of voices in the distance. The reptile paused, slowly turning to look back to the edge of the crater Nic's explosives had created around the door. He lifted the cowboy hat he wore, allowing the buzzing electrical signals in the air to get through to the horns, and he could just barely make out the presence of three people coming his way.

Fuck...

There was little cover in front of the Vault, and with how long the Vault door took to open, and how loud it would be, there was no hope of getting back inside. Even if he did get it open and inside in time, they were going to be on him and inside the Vault with him before he could close the door again.

Three on one wasn't that bad with his new scales, admittedly, but that was if they didn't have rifles on them. If they did, this was going to get very painful, very fast.

Okay, okay. Get down, get under the stairs. That's not much cover, but it's better than nothing.

And with that, the reptile hopped down, and just in time. Tucking himself under the ruins of the stairs, he peered around to see the approaching intruders.

They were other humans, of course, though one showed the beginning rots of a ghoul in progress. He shook his head, ignoring him in favor of the other two.

"Well, at least someone cleared out the Assaultrons," the apparent leader of the group muttered, in the process of holstering a pistol. "All those explosions yesterday must have been from someone having a dust-up out here."

"Ain't seeing any bodies, though, Mac," the other, a shorter, burlier man muttered, turning his head left and right. "If they came here for something, they're already long-gone."

"Heh. You ain't looking at the big picture," 'Mac' said, reaching into the pocket of a leather jacket. "Who cares about who was fighting? What matters is, we got a straight shot at that Vault now."

"We'd have a better shot at it if that girl hadn't stolen all our C4."

"Well, who's fault is that, Pete?" Mac shook his head as the three of them came to a stop just the other side of the stairs. "Besides, I got something just as good."

"Grenades aren't gonna punch through that."

"Hey, we can try."

Grenades? You assholes, that's just going to blow the console up...

And that would spell the end of getting into that Vault ever again. He shook his head. No, that had to be stopped. He slowly pulled his rifle off his arm, holding it more like a pistol due to his greater height and size, watching as Mac and Pete started climbing up the ruins of the stairs. They had to work it, too, straining to reach the upper part.

The ghoul-becoming, however, stayed down at the bottom.

“Keep an eye out for anyone, Saul.”

Saul nodded, turning slowly to look the other way. Spencer shook his head, glancing up, then back at the ghoul. He estimated that he had maybe two minutes before they did something stupid enough to blow up the console, maybe less. That was enough to get rid of Saul, for sure, but if he didn't react fast, the other two could be a problem.

He'd just have to be fast, then.

Kicking the half-rotted man in the back of the knee, he felt a sickening squish, watching as the blow cut right through the man's leg and severed it in two. As Saul went down, bleeding and screaming, Spencer bit back the bile in his throat and jumped up, holding the rifle outstretched at the other two.

“Let's not do anything stupid now,” he said, moving to stand with one foot over Saul's belt and the other on his chest. He could feel the squishiness under his feet, and hoped that was just the rot going on, not a consequence of how big he was now. “You two...throw your weapons down.”

Mac and Pete looked at him in shock, their eyes wide open. Saul continued to grunt and grumble, but there was no way even for a ghoul to throw him off. The reptile lifted his other hand, securing the rifle in a proper aim.

“I said, throw your weapons away.”

Pete did. Mac didn't.

To give the bandit credit, he had a quickdraw that probably would have spelled the end to the average Wastelander. Spencer had never seen a hand move that fast, never seen someone pull off a shot like that with that much speed and accuracy. And he had never, ever had the experience of a bullet flattening itself against his forehead before.

His head whipped back, and he stumbled slightly. He groaned from the hit, but didn't quite go over. Instead, he slowly pulled his head back down, reaching up and pulling the bullet free from his face. It was a flattened disk now, with a pin mark on the bottom, and he tossed it to the side before aiming his weapon at the two shocked bandits.

“Okay...before I rip your head off, you want to do what I say this time?”

“How...how did you -”

SHOOM!

The laser bolt took the bandit in the jacket, leaving a burnt hole in the flappy side of it. It was right next to Mac’s chest, too, showing that he could easily hit the other man’s ribs if he decided to take it seriously.

The pistol went flying pretty quickly after that.

“Now, get down here.”

As soon as Pete and Mac had joined their half-ghoul, legless friend - who had since fainted from blood loss - Spencer tossed them a Stimpak.

“Might not keep him alive for long, but it’ll give you the chance to deal with him, get him somewhere safe.”

“...Why are you helping him?” Pete asked.

“Because I’m not an asshole. I didn’t mean to get rid of his leg, and I sure as hell didn’t mean to kill him.”

While Mac was busy staring at him, Pete took the Stimpak and jabbed it into the half-zombie’s other leg. Nodding, Spencer reached out for the leader, only for the leather-coated raider to pull back.

“What are you doing?”

“Making sure that you don’t do something stupid.”

“What - nnngh!”

It wasn’t that hard to wrap his fingers around Mac’s throat, though it was a bit harder to keep him from squirming too much. Glancing at Pete and bobbing the laser rifle with his free hand, he reminded the other man to keep back for the moment. He even went out of his way to show that he wasn’t squeezing or choking their little leader.

Time to see how well this works outside of sex...

His scales had been more than effective at keeping him protected from small-arms fire. His horns had done all that he had asked and more when it came to detecting people out in the world. Now, it was time to see just how good the slime and pheromones that his feet, hands, and...well, other parts produced.

With his fingers right over the man's throat and pressing against the bulges of his arteries and veins, it was easy for the slime to start sinking in. In a little less than twenty seconds, Mac's eyes started flitting between closed and open, his body shaking from head to toe. The shakes stopped shortly after, and soon, he was staring straight ahead with half-open eyes, his head wobbling slightly.

All told, it took less than a minute to render him into a suggestible, tired state. Spencer had to admit, that was pretty impressive.

Wonder what it would be like if I did that with my dick in someone. If you can get drunk off of having alcohol up your ass...

Best not to take that too far right then. He was on a mission, after all, and he didn't need to push this too far.

As he pulled his hand back from Mac's throat, ready at any moment to grab him again, he realized that Pete was staring open-mouthed at him. The bandit looked like he'd just seen something impossible, and perhaps, in a way, he had. Spencer chuckled.

"What?"

"What did you do to him?"

"Just made it so he'll do what I tell him."

"You just - you just touch people, and they obey?"

"Eh, kinda."

That was a bit more than what he could do, but he could make it so that they were very, very willing to go along with what he said. And it took time, he had to remember. Time that he didn't always have. He stood up, poking Mac with the end of his rifle.

"You're going to take Saul there and get him some medical attention. No hurting people to get it. And then, you're never going to come back to this Vault again, or send anyone here. Got it?"

"Got it," Mac muttered sleepily.

"Repeat it to me."

"I'm going to take Saul, get him medical attention. No hurting people. Never come back, never send anyone here."

"Good. Now, get out of here. Now."

Mac grunted as he got to his feet, grabbing Saul by the wrist and pulling his unconscious form up. The Stimpak had been enough to help close the wound, but that was all. The half-zombie was going to need more attention than that, and he was going to need it sooner than later.

He shook his head, about to go back to the Vault, only to notice that Pete hadn't left yet. He arched an eyebrow at the other human.

"Aren't you going with them?"

"Uh..."

"I didn't touch *you*, you know. I didn't take your brain away."

"Lemme get this straight. You're harder to kill than a Deathclaw. You can control people's minds. And you're smart?"

"...Pretty much."

"You got an army yet?"

"Heh, why would I - no, no, I don't."

"... You want one?"

This was going in a direction that the reptile most assuredly hadn't been expecting to go, and he didn't quite know what to say to that. He'd just been defending himself and the property that he had found; now, he was getting flattered by someone that was asking if he had an army? What in the world?

He arched an eyeridge at the human, and Pete rubbed the back of his head.

"Uh...yeah. Probably not something I can give you."

"Keep talking."

"Maybe I should -"

"No, about the army. Why are you asking?"

"Well, you know...you know?"

"No, I don't."

"..." Pete sighed, sitting down on the rubble of the ladder, and for the first time, Spencer took a much harder look at him.

While he was a stocky guy, that was mostly due to the metal armor that he was wearing, scavenged bits of combat armor from police stations and worse, he imagined. The actual man beneath it wasn't doing that well, with gaunt cheeks that stretched dark skin, and eyes that were coming close to popping free. There was a radiation burn on the side of his neck that suggested that he'd run into some tough stuff, and there were many bullet holes in the armor that he wore, too.

This was a man that had seen action but not gotten anything from it, and someone that was just trying to survive. So many people were in that same position.

Pete sighed, rubbing his hand over his head and through his hair. A few strands came free in the process before he was able to look up again.

"You coulda killed us. And you didn't. You helped Saul, and you didn't take Mac's head off, even though nobody would have blamed ya."

"So?"

"Not a lotta people would do that. Plus, you're scary. Real scary. Would prefer someone like that telling me what to do instead of having to fight someone like that."

"I see."

It was, again, the sort of thing that he honestly didn't want. When it came right down to it, he didn't have the time or inclination to actually direct people like that. Slavery, kingship: they were fun ideas, in terms of fantasies, but he didn't want to have that much control over other people in the long run. It meant that he had to think for them, reassure them, direct them in addition to doing all the stuff that he had to do for himself. Nobody had time to live more than their own lives.

Making the world better, using the Vaults to get what he wanted, was one thing. Using that to take in people that just wanted strong men to follow? That was a recipe for disaster.

He rubbed the back of his neck, sighing to himself. Being this capable was starting to cause problems.

"Look. I'm not looking for an army. If you are serious about wanting to help, and you're willing to do more than just take orders -"

"More than take orders?" Pete arched an eyebrow, chuckling. "Heh, must be damn near invincible if you want people thinking."

"It makes things easier on me. Look. If you're interested in that, meet me south of Taffington Boathouse before sundown."

“The old Minuteman place?”

“My place, now.”

“Yeah...yeah, I’ll think about it.” Pete nodded. “And...you know, for what it’s worth. Thanks.”

“Whatever.”

He gestured for the other man to leave, and this time, he did. He watched him go for a moment or two, then turned back to the Vault. There were a few more things that he needed to dig out of there before he was done, and he wanted to check on that cyborg from last time.

#

With the Vault door left open, he was able to enjoy a bit of fresh air that he hadn’t been able to last time. Spencer walked down the long, empty corridors to the labs in the back and, more importantly, to the wall of cyborgs that he and Nic had examined last time.

On the way, he glanced at himself in the metal on the wall. His reflection glanced back, and he realized just how hard it must have been for Pete and Mac to see what they had. He was a seven-foot tall beast, something that was covered in scales, wearing a cowboy hat, and butt-naked. He had muscles that were visibly on par with a super-mutant in the arms and legs, though he wasn’t so wide across the shoulders as them, and he had a tail that ran down to the ground and dragged when he didn’t pay attention to it. He had a slight snout going on, big enough for him to see when he looked straight ahead, looking somewhere between a crocodile, a Deathclaw, and a lizard, and he was naked as the day he was born.

Seeing that, complete with the bestial, dangling dong between his legs, pointing a gun at you wouldn’t have been very easy to take. Shaking his head, he kept walking until he reached the wall of cyborgs.

Just like before, they were all dead...

Save for one.

Spencer leaned over the one that was connected to the power supply via his back. It was covered in metal armor, thicker than what Pete had been wearing, and with dozens of weapons implanted into the armor itself. He could see barrels poking out of the top and bottom of each wrist, along the forearm, and embedded into the shoulders. Looking at the imitation of nostrils in the nose, he could see that one was a weapon and the other was an air vent. Half of the fingers had been replaced with gun barrels, and those were just the obvious ones.

The cyborg had two semi-living eyes, balls that were filled with liquid with the living orbs still inside. They were darkened, at the point, but he could tell that these ones were less rotted than the others. They might still work.

Question is...do I turn him on?

There were more guns there than he could easily take, and he doubted that it would be a peaceful wake-up process. However, having someone like this guarding a place...well, that would be worth it in and of itself. He looked better constructed than most of the robots out there in the Wasteland, and he imagined that this one would have the firepower of an Assaultron and a Sentry Bot, but with as much speed as an Eyebot. The combination would be *deadly*, particularly if there was a still-working brain in there.

And if he could be convinced to work nicely.

That's always the question...

Much as Nic was going to be helpful in designing turrets and walls, he needed someone that could fight, too. He could, and he had the body to take some damage, but this was something different. This was someone that was built to destroy.

Finger on the switch, Spencer told himself. If anything happens, turn him off. If any gun starts warming up, turn him off.

With a deep breath, he touched the power switch at the wall, pressing the second, activating button.

Just like that, the cyborg started humming, coming online with nothing more than that. His eyes started glowing, his head lifted, and there was a glow from behind the eyeballs. Robotic limbs lifted, clenched, then lifted again, and the cyborg slowly stared down at his hands. A rising whine followed, and there were words in it.

“What happened - what - what is this? These aren't - these aren't mine!”

...Shit.

Before the cyborg could freak out further, Spencer hit the button again, and just like that, it powered down once more. He shook his head, sighing. So much for that idea. Then again, it had been a long-shot, anyway.

Still...

He looked at the cyborg's face. It had frozen, not in peaceful tranquility as before, but in an expression of anguish. It looked like someone that had just had everything ripped away, who had been sentenced to Hell.

Much as he had other things to do, he couldn't just leave someone like that. He sighed, going to the nearest desk. There had to be some -

Yes, there was. He pulled out a piece of paper, and scrawled a note with a pen that was miraculously working. It was a short, simple thing, a simple message for the cyborg if or when they woke back up, telling them what had happened. They had been roboticized, at best, and at worse, they were a brain that had been put into a roboticized body. Either way, it was something that probably couldn't be reversed.

Leaving his condolences on the bottom, he folded it up and wrapped the paper around two of the cyborg's fingers. That would probably hold it for a while.

Right, well...that's done... He glanced down the hallway. Might as well see if they have anything else worthwhile down there...

The End