

## Chapter 48: Work Work

“Well then, I’ll leave things here to the both of you,” I placed a hand on the shoulders of my new head of security and the manager of the Firebird branch before I entered the car with Leo.

The QG, Roger, had come through with some potential hires who were looking for more stable employment. It was a surprise when one of the mercenaries I interviewed wanted to be hired as an office staff instead of security, but her resume met our requirements, so I had no qualms about it. I even let her be the branch manager since our operations in Firebird would be minimal for now and anyone who was vetted would do.

We planned to simply have a warehouse here for our trucks to drop off and pick up their cargo, and it wasn’t hard to find such a warehouse, even in the current climate. The main bottleneck was security right now to cut through the wasteland, so I was able to finish off my business quickly and start my return to NLA.

Back in NLA was where the bulk of our workload lay ahead as we needed to procure trucks rated for the wasteland, rent a maintenance facility, hire personnel, start planning our operations, marketing, and loads others. The only caveat was that we could lower our requirements for security personnel and get away with it because we didn’t need to fend off wastelanders and only the mutants.

The drive was duller than before, with only the two of us this time. We planned out our route so we could stop for the night to rest. We luckily didn’t encounter the colossal mutant this time and were able to safely trek across the wasteland in three days.

When we finally reunited with Vin, the first thing he did was not greet us or congratulate us, but instead, complained, “Please Rollo, hire a manager ASAP, I could handle the bureaucracy before when it was simple but I just can’t anymore.”

“Okay, okay. I left a lot on your shoulders, I understand. Thank you, you can take tomorrow off,” I comforted him on reflex, as I didn’t know what else to do when seeing Vin in such a state.

“Yes! I really need that. I’ll transfer you all the documents that I was working on and the scheduled meetings I had booked right away.”

His enthusiasm scared me a little, so I had him take the rest of the day off too as soon as we made it back to the office.

Within the information Vin had left behind were updates on what QuickLinks Logistics had been doing since the attack. It seemed they were completely pulling out of NLA and gathering what they had left into Firebird.

Little was as gratifying as seeing our hard work come to fruition. What was left to do was to build up a functional logistic network to profit from the current spike in demand while it lasted. The first step of that was to reaffirm my deal with the Wells Clan.

The next morning, we set out with our convoy back into the wasteland and followed the route displayed on the device we got from the wastelanders. This time we were headed in a slightly different direction and further, as well.

We knew we were close when the usual team of dune buggies had come out to escort us. Sarah nor Caleb were there when we arrived. Instead, an unfamiliar man had led us straight to the building where the leader of their clan resided.

It was kind of weird seeing the exact same building as before, despite knowing we were in a different location. I wondered what they used to transport or if they rebuilt it to the same specifications.

“Welcome, friend. I have heard good things from our information network. Tell me, have you accomplished the mission?” Eugene said as he stroked his beard.

“Yes, your enemies will no longer operate in your territories. We’re still monitoring their movements, so I’ll let you know if anything changes.”

“That is good news. Tell me all about the details.”

I talked until I was parched, but I managed to narrate our exploits and answer any questions he had. It wasn’t until Sarah and Caleb showed up that I was saved.

“So about you promised me before—”

“Yes, once we have confirmed the news, you may operate your business across our territories as you like. Keep in mind this is our territory only. Just like your corporations, we aren’t monolithic, so the other clans will not take kindly to your intrusion into their territory.”

“I understand, thank you.”

*Now the main issue is to set up our logistic network, we’ll need to rent a lot of trucks for now until we have enough funds to purchase our own. We’ll also need the bare minimum facilities to operate with.*

After spending some time with Sarah and Caleb, I returned to the new pile of problems awaiting me back in the city.

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“Nice to meet you, Mr. Halls. I am Jared Reinhart from QuickLinks Logistics,” The overweight man across from me shook my hand and gestured for us to take a seat.

“A pleasure to meet you as well, Mr Reinhart.”

“Let us get straight into it then. Here are the terms for leasing this warehouse. If you are able to sign it today, we are willing to give you a ten percent discount for the first three months.”

I glanced over the document on the terminal he placed in front of me and redirected the feed to my lawyers to review.

“That is an attractive offer but brings along some problems. You see, I’m a very picky person who likes to shop around first. Maybe if you could extend that discount for the entire first year, I could make a decision right away.”

“I understand, but this is the best offer I’m authorized to give. This warehouse may not be brand new, but the price is already well under the market price. It is located in a secured and convenient area with access to the highways ”

“Is that so...I thought there were rumors that the location was recently attacked. I wouldn’t call it secure.”

He grimaced and took a sip from his cup, “There’s no such thing as a perfectly secure area in this world. Using the advantageous geographic location, we were able to protect our employees, so it is truly secure in that sense. But I regrettably see that malicious rumors have started to spread despite our successes. I’m willing to acquiesce and give you a discount for the first six months.”

*Hold it together me...Please don't burst out laughing when negotiations are near the finish line, but the irony of trying to rent from the people you attacked was just too hilarious to me, and now he's even giving me a discount.*

“Very well, I accept,” I declared while tensing every muscle on my face to keep them in place.

I had been swamped with paperwork and meetings to ensure we had the proper licenses and equipment we needed to operate. Having finished this final meeting for the day, I decided to leave everything related to acquiring trucks to Vin. He had his day off, so I was going to put him back to work.

As for me, I was going to spend the rest of the day relaxing and shopping. The first thing I did was to get changed out of my stuffy corpo suit and went to try out a milkshake from one of the places on my ‘to-try’ list that had just been building up since I was always busy or out in the wastelands.

Then my next stop was the mall to shop around. There was something I had been meaning to buy, but I put it off for a while now, so it was about time I got off my lazy ass.

Arriving at a megabuilding on the smaller side, I was created with fancy displays with brand names plastered all over, and all the nearby pedestrians seemed well-dressed.

The entire building was a shopping mall. It was mind-boggling to think that the building was so enormous it was classified as a megabuilding. It had less than two hundred floors, though, making it one of the smallest megabuildings around.

Just like in the mall in Elevate City, the floor that sold weapons was located in the basement, where security was visibly stricter than the other floors. The layout was familiar as well, with each brand taking up some space on the shared floor, like a department store.

I spotted the brand I had been using, Premier Arms, and went straight to them.

From my experience, there are always some moments where I was forced into a traditional gunfight. While that wasn't my forte, I wanted to be prepared. The pistol railgun I had was great and all, but it just wasn't cutting it against multiple enemies.

"Hi sir, how may we help you?" A clerk quickly came up to assist me.

"Yes, I was looking for something that could handle multiple targets."

"I see. Are you looking for something for close quarters or more of a medium range?"

"Close quarters. I wanted it to be compact and lightweight as well."

*All of my engagement has been pretty close range owing to my stealth capabilities.*

"Yes, of course. Let me bring out some options for you. Would you like to test-fire them?"

"Yes, please."

He quickly brought out a few gun cases and led me to the side of the entire sales floor through a door. It was like going to the change room in a big box store, but the change room was replaced with a shooting range instead.

"I have three selections of personal defense weapons for you. Allow me to introduce you to them here," He explained as he took out three boxy submachine guns from the cases.

He went on to explain the main features of each gun, with the first one being a directed energy weapon that shot particle beams. It was configured to shoot rapidly, but the beam intensity could still be adjusted in exchange for power. This was probably the coolest thing I've ever shot.

The next one he introduced was some weird plasma spitter that shot bright beams of plasma contained in a magnetic field. This one was honestly not that great of a fit for me, as it would give my position away the moment I shot out bright, glowing projectiles.

The final option was a coilgun I was familiar with. It was optimized to shoot these smart rounds that could lock onto targets. Although it was the most boring option, it was also the one that fit my needs the most.

I didn't like putting myself down, but I was honestly not the best shot, so the smart ammo helped. It was also the only choice that didn't shoot bright beams, which made it more effective from stealth.

"Excellent choice, sir. The ECA-17, also known as the Coil Wrath, is probably the most reliable product from our PDW line. Please be reminded to use our company's ammunition or our warranty will be voided with this weapon."

I glanced over at the price tag and it wasn't that bad until I looked down at the section for the ammo.

*I sure hope my new business gets up and running soon.*

After shopping around a little more without an objective, I returned to my hotel with a full harvest. As soon as I got into my room, I spotted Leo on the couch, working away at his terminal.

"Rollo, about that chip you had me d—" I placed down my bags and turned to him before he could finish, as my curiosity was piqued. "Did you already decrypt it?"

"Not fully. Just the first level, but I got a sense of what it contains with the titles of each column in a spreadsheet."

"Go on then. What did you find?"

"It is a ledger of some sort and it belongs to SocialCorp."

"SocialCorp? As in *the* largest corp around, that SocialCorp?"

"Yea..."