

It wasn't until we got within sight of Rivet City again that I remembered a rather crucial piece of information. Among the many other changes that separated this world from the video game, the settlements in this reality were drastically different from their in-game counterparts. Besides a significant population increase, Megaton was a much more fully realized town, far beyond the simplified version I had been familiar with. Farms, more jobs, more variety of jobs, all of it had been spread around the town, and as a result, it had looked quite a bit different.

Rivet City was much the same.

As we approached, the first difference I noticed was that the aircraft carrier's upper deck was not empty. It was difficult to make out what was up there, since we were at a pretty bad angle, but there were definitely several scrap buildings built there in the open, as well as what appeared to be some defensive structures.

The second thing I realized, when it became visible as we approached, was that the bridge system was visibly very different. The bridge itself was more robust, with supports and anchors attached to the two cranes that controlled its position. On top of that, the anchor point on the outside, the side on land, was much more built up and expanded. The entire bridge construction was higher up, mostly because the aircraft carrier itself was at a larger, more realistic scale. That meant that the anchor building on the exterior side had much more room.

Where the in-game version had just been a simple metal structure, this version was the heart of a decent-sized camping spot. The core was a large metal structure four stories tall, but built off that was a large protective tent made of thin sheet metal, tarps, and cloth. Already, I could see people inside, traders and other groups, though a lot of them were watching over brahmin pack animals.

I could also see about a dozen people in dark combat armor patrolling around, as well as several *mounted miniguns* on the top of the central structure, where the bridge was currently connected. From there, they could sweep around the entire area.

The area around the metal structure and tent had quite a few other small structures. Nothing as permanent or complete as to be called an actual building, instead they mostly consisted of smaller tents, marketplace stalls, and things of that nature. Some of them were occupied, some of them were abandoned, but nothing approached the marketplace we were hoping to find.

Thankfully, Sarah had already explained that the market was inside the city's hangar, or I would have felt mildly disappointed.

As we approached, one of the patrolling pairs spotted us and immediately headed in our direction. I could see them looking us over in surprise, but despite that, they remained professional.

"Hold up," one of them, a man armed with a combat shotgun, said, holding out his hand. "Who are you? What do you want?"

"My name is General Connor of the Wasteland Company, here to sell some goods," I explained simply.

"And I am Sentinel Lyons, of the Brotherhood of Steel, acting as their guide," Sarah added from beside me.

The security guard looked from me to Sarah, to the camels, and back to me. Eventually, he activated his radio and said a few quick words through it before speaking up again.

"What kind of goods exactly?"

"Pristine weapons, ammo, and medical supplies," I explained. "In substantial amounts."

"...Right. Well, it's ten caps per... pack animal, per night to stay under the tent," he revealed, after muttering something about us being above his pay grade. "If you cause trouble and get thrown out, that money is forfeit, payment due before you enter."

"Thank you," I said with a nod, before smirking and continuing. "Should I wait for your boss under the tent, or climb to the top of the tent?"

"He will come to you."

I nodded with a chuckle, and when the two stepped aside, I continued to head towards the large tent structure. Finding the people to pay for access was easy, they all about chased us down.

After entering the protection of the tent, we steered the mounts to an unoccupied corner, a large section partitioned off by sheet-metal walls. We had the camels sit along the edges, my soldiers climbing off each of them and stretching.

Unsurprisingly, we were getting a lot of strange looks.

"Okay, I think we are going to leave most of the goods out here for now, and carry a sample inside while we try and find some buyers," I explained. "I want four soldiers to stay here and keep watch over everything. We will rotate them out so people get a chance to look around. Johnson, you are with me, as are Kelsey and John. Carlos, you are in charge of the rest of them. I want you to explore and take note of anything interesting. We will all meet back here in... four hours."

"Anything in particular we should be looking for, sir?" Carlos asked as he took off his helmet and clipped it to his hip.

"I want you guys to bring us back some lunch, just get a sample of what they have available," I responded. "Other than that, socializing is encouraged so you can get a feel for the city. You are *not* off duty, so behave yourself."

After various forms of confirmation, the groups split up and began to prepare for their individual tasks. The trade group started picking a few bags to show off what we had to sell. As we were doing that, Sarah exited her armor beside the camels.

"I'm coming with your group," she explained, clipping a laser pistol to her hip while her rifle stayed with the power armor. "Knight Walters is going to stay here and help watch my armor and your dunebots."

"My what?" I asked, looking back at her.

"Your dunebots," she said, a confused look on her face as she gestured back at the camels.

I turned to look at Carlos, who had the decency to look sheepish. I had heard them discussing nicknames for the camels again, but I hadn't thought it would catch on. However, Sarah seemed to have accepted the nickname and would likely expect that since the *dunebots* were common in our larger, fictional group, the nickname would already be set in stone.

"Right," I said, rolling my eyes at Carlos, before looking back at Sarah. "That sounds good, they can keep each other company."

She nodded and opened her mouth to continue when we spotted someone approaching our little corner of the large tent. I turned to see four security guards, all armed but in relaxed positions. The leader I could easily recognize as [Harkness](#). He was armed with a plasma rifle.

"Are you General Connor?" He asked, looking directly at me. "I don't recognize your group. Is this your first time visiting Rivet City?"

"That's right," I confirmed with a nod. "Just looking to offload some goods."

"Hmm... awfully well armed for traders," He pointed out.

"We are a mercenary company, newly arrived in the Capital Wasteland," I assured him. "We won't be causing trouble, I assure you."

"Good. You might have some fancy gear, but I promise Rivet City Security is more than ready to handle any... issues. Behave yourselves."

"Before you go, could I interest you in taking a look at our weapons?" I asked, nodding to our stock. "The weapons are pristine, right off the production line. We would much prefer selling to Rivet City security than random merchants."

"...Rivet City security still draws stock from the several armories inside the ship," he explained simply. "We don't need more weapons."

And with that, he stepped away, his escorts following him. As I watched him leave, I couldn't help but wonder what I would do about him. Judging from the fact that we appeared to be early in the timeline, and that the story of Fallout had yet to start, it was possible that the Institute slave hunter hadn't arrived yet. It was probably going to have to involve some very specific actions if we didn't want to get mixed up in the institute. As I was thinking, Sarah stepped closer, watching Harkness leave as well.

"What a ray of sunshine," Sarah muttered under her breath.

"Eh, sometimes it just takes a while for people to warm up to us," I responded with a shrug. "I seem to remember you needed a bit of a push yourself."

She rolled her eyes, and I chuckled before lifting one of the bags partially filled with bricks of ammo. I looked around for a moment, confirming everyone was ready. Johnson was carrying the bag of guns over his back, while Kelsey had volunteered to carry the medical supplies. When I could see everyone was ready, I stepped out, heading to the center of the tent where the stairs led up, passing by several people giving us more probing looks.

When we reached the top, the security stationed by the heavy weapons watched us pass, eyeing us closely as we walked across the bridge.

"Told you you would get a lot of attention," Sarah said. "It's actually kind of novel, I'm used to us being the center of attention. Security barely even noticed Walter and I."

"Glad I could provide you with such an experience," I responded, as we stepped through a doorway into the interior of Rivet City.

While my group followed the clearly marked signs that directed us to the marketplace, Carlos' group followed the smaller, more detailed signs that directed them deeper into the ship. His first task was to try to find out if there were any rooms to rent for reasonable prices. We were staying for at least one night, but depending on the cost, we might be sleeping on mattresses or out by the camels.

As we walked through the halls, it was shocking to see just how different the interior was from what I had expected. It seemed that while the game was restricted to what was possible in the game engine, meaning the city's occupants basically just moved into the existing rooms, people here were much more liberal in their modifications.

The citizens seemed all too happy to cut down doors, walls, hatches, floors, and ceilings. They never cut too much away, and when they did, there was clear structural reinforcement in place, which told me that someone knew what they were doing, but on the way to our destination, every doorway, which normally would have looked like a heavy-duty [naval bulkhead door](#), had been cut away and widened. Chunks of the door were then welded to the walls, cut up, and reformed to support the ship's structure.

Sarah could have likely made it all the way to the market in her power armor, without even needing to duck.

Not all doorways were opened that wide, however. Several places that we passed were cut open to the size of normal doors, while others just had the bulkhead doors removed. Through these open doors, we saw several different things, including a barber shop, some sort of repair shop, a few homes, storage rooms, and more. All of them were modified for the owner's use, most by joining two or more rooms to make them more reasonable in size.

Then we finally arrived at the marketplace.

[Where the original](#) was just a few stalls in a small open space inside the ship, in this reality, the market was significantly larger. It took up around half of the [hangar space](#), with at least a few dozen shops set up with stalls of varying levels of size and complexity. Just from where we were standing, at the top of a stairway down to the hangar floor, I could already see two stalls selling weapons.

"Sarah, do you have any idea how many people live in Rivet City?" I asked, looking out across the hangar.

"Around four thousand," she responded. "It's about three times as many as Megaton."

"Huh... wasn't expecting it to be that big," I admitted, before shaking off the surprise and leading the group down the stairs.

It took us a few minutes of wandering to find our first sale, a weapons dealer who catered to people living in Rivet City. He did not buy all of our weapons stock, but he did end up buying one bag of ammo and another of guns. John ended up running back outside and eventually returned with one of the soldiers on guard duty, carrying the merchant's new goods. Eventually, we settled on a mix, and we traded bags, mine full of his newly purchased goods, his several bags of caps.

I handed them off to the soldier who had come in with John, and he headed back outside, a duffel bag half full of caps on his hip.

The search for buyers continued, and we ended up selling off chunks of our product all over, before finally offloading the last bit of our weapons and ammo to a traveling merchant who had set up a temporary space for themselves, buying and selling large amounts of goods.

While I was happy to sell the weapons and ammo to anyone who was interested, I wanted the medical supplies to be sold to people who would keep them here, at Rivet City. For them, making caps was only half the goal, the other half was distributing higher-quality medicine to the Wasteland, helping people stay healthy and live at a better quality of life.

Unlike Megaton, Rivet City had a few places where you could receive quality medical treatment. Stationed far apart on the large pre-war aircraft carrier, we visited all three of them, selling each of them a third of our remaining medical supplies. Unsurprisingly, the doctors were shocked by the quantity and the quality of our goods, and eagerly asked for as much as we could bring them. Unlike Megaton, which could barely take a single shipment of medical supplies every month, Rivet City would likely take them as quickly as we could produce and ship them.

Between Adam, Megaton, the Brotherhood of Steel, and now Rivet City, we had plenty of long-term buyers for our medical goods, and a new place to offload our extra weapons.

When we were done trading with the various doctors, nurses, and medics, making sure to give them a fair price in the process, we headed back to the entrance into the city, now carrying the last of the caps we had earned.

Altogether, we had earned over eight thousand caps, an astounding amount that would drastically shift what we were capable of. Already, I was excited to get home and start buying things.

When we had all gathered together, Carlos' having group returned from their short adventures through the city, we sat down and ate the simple food they had brought back with them. There were actually a good number of places to buy food, even a few that one could call restaurants, though, to no one's surprise, their menus were on the more limited side.

Despite that, I did find myself impressed with what Carlos and his group managed to find. A lot of it was simple fruits, most of them mutated like mutfruit, but they also found a few loaves of a hardy, dense bread made from razorgrain, meats preserved in various ways, and even a few chunks of cheese. Part of me realized it was inevitable that their food would improve over time, especially with the natural job specialization that happens with so many people gathered together.

There was still something nice about eating "real" food, even if it actually didn't taste as clean or good as what we had in our rations.