

## Fallout Equestria: Price of Paradise

### Chapter 2

#### Eight Legged Caps

*"Of all the worst things that could happen. This is... **THE... WORST... POSSIBLE... THING!**"*

Morning came and I woke from my not so pleasant slumber on the same cot I had been spending my past few days recovering from the fall on. Oh to be sure Patch had me moving around to see how well I was healing, but would refuse to let me take my amble outside of the thatched bungalow which had become my temporary place of residents. Every night he brought me a "dose" of that nasty tasting bitter brew. If it hadn't been for the brew actually making me feel better I'd swear he was trying to kill me... Okay well not me, but my stomach, at the least. Seriously I don't know what it could have done to piss Patch off.

Patch seems like a pretty nice buck \*cough\* for a surface pony \*cough\*. From the time I've spent with him, he seemed to be a pretty level headed buck. The only exception was when the subject of his home comes up. He got all glassy eyed... Like it was some far off place he might never get to see again. If that was the case then I know exactly how he's feeling. I'd been suffering from some homesickness of my own too.

Today though I got to go outside! Patch warned me it may not be like what I expect. He said something about not getting angry, pissy, or frightened. Me? Frightened? He must not know me very well. I don't get frightened.

Before I left I needed to take care of some morning essentials. I managed to find two buckets, a sponge, and a tub; It may not have been hot, running water and soap, but a filly's gotta bathe.

Honestly, who would go wandering about the disease and monster infested surface without bathing regularly? Not this mare, that's who.

Now for breakfast.

"Please don't be bitter brew! Please don't be bitter brew..." I Mumbled to myself as I entered the small, makeshift kitchen. "And it's..." I said giving a pleading look to Patch.

"Bitter brew. Buck me sideways with a buccaneer's blitz..." Grimacing I made my way to the table and sat down. Patch was already eating a bowl of strange, mashed, pink fruit. The aureate smell made my stomach grumble hungrily. "Patch are you trying to make my stomach go on strike?" Patch looked up from his bowl befuddled and began to open his mouth. "You know what never-mind don't answer that."

"Buf if nof for founf." He mouthed through his meal, swallowing before continuing his sentence. "My friend showed me how to make it last night, so I thought I'd brew a batch to see if I got the recipe right. I have to say her recipe was a bit more intricate than I had first imagined it would be."

*Her? Like this goof could have a marefriend. Probably trip all over himself... Still why am I a little upset?*

Shaking the thought from my mind I gave a sigh of relief. "So where's my breakfast?" He nodded

to the counter. Sitting on it was a bowl of similar smelling, pink and green fruit chutney. Glad to not be eating bitter brew I hastily scarfed down the rich, earthy flavored mixture.

“Wha’s the plan for today.” I manged between mouth fulls. “You ‘onna show me round this dump?” I had to admit this stuff was pretty tasty. Not as tasty as the stuff in that flask Patch let me try on the first day, but still pretty good considering what my diet had recently consisted of...

Finishing off his serving Patch burped and looked up at me. “Scuse me. That was good.” He magicked his bowl over to the sink. “Today I’ll show you round town for a bit, but then we gotta meet up with my friend. She’s been anxious to introduce us to the mayor. She hasn’t told me why though, said I’d understand when we met ‘em.”

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After breakfast was done and over with we made our through town. Patch notified me that the building I had been resting in was the towns makeshift clinic. Down the hill on the dirt road was the saloon, the general store, and the pier.

“If I had any bits or caps on me I’d take you to the saloon and by you a Sparkle Cola before we mozy on over to the mayor office,” Patch shrugged. “but I’m broke so we should probably hoof it.”

My brow arched “Caps? What do you mean? Like bottle caps? What sane person would use those as currency?”

Patch shrugged “Dunno, but that’s what they use. They still accept bits for trading, but caps are worth more.” He motioned one of his hooves a little further down the coast. “We’re headed to the big, rusted, beached oil tanker over there. That’s where the mayor’s office is.”

It wasn’t much compared to Hayday. Hell, you could barely call this place a shanty town. But here were ponies (...and zebras) surviving, if not thriving, on the surface! And whats more, none of them looked even the tiniest bit like the disease ridden, mindless monsters that the government had made them out to be. Something must have got the brass of the enclave all confused... maybe they just missed this island. Hayday is pretty far out on the frontier of enclave territory it’s possible... right?

\* \* \*

The interior of the rust bucket they called an office was in much better condition than it’s exterior led me to believe. Not to say that it still wasn’t a complete mess, but it was decidedly less rusty.

A zebra mare approached us as we entered. “Ah I’m glad to see the winged one is well, I’m sorry if my bitter brew put her through hell.” She smiled and nodded to me in greeting.

Patch stepped between us. “Xen, Silva. Silva, Xen. I hope we can all be friends.”

Xen led us through the corridors of the beached vessel.

The room she led us to appeared to be the ships galley repurposed into some sort of temple to the past. Faded, moldy, old pre war posters hung in frames along the wall. My eyes were drawn to an

image of cyan, rainbow maned mare superimposed over what could only be described as a rainbow colored mushroom cloud. Words under the traitor read **"Looking to be as awesome as me? Sorry, but its not going to happen, but you can be 20% cooler and join M.O.A. today!"** a disclaimer in small font under that notified readers that earth ponies need not apply.

An elderly, green earth pony buck sat behind a desk watching the group as they entered. Coughing as he stood. he approached the group.

"Nice ta finally meet'cha." He said. "Name's Brine. Someponies round these parts got ta call'n me Mayor Brine but that's a load of horse apples. I'm jus' da' mos' senior pony alive that still has da' mind ta do things right." As he spoke his right eye moved lazily from Patch to me as the other sat in it's socket staring blankly ahead. I was starting to feel like maybe I should have skipped breakfast. Eyes should not move like that.

"On'ta business though." He said stomping his hoof to accent his point. "You two is new ta Zhue's Hope so you'll be need'n ta know da' rules around these parts. Most o' em are common sense o'course, but there are a few that given other circumstances would appear ta be... well, extreme." Coughing again to clear his throat he continued. "Point is everypony does their share o' work round here. Patch has been do'n a mighty fine job as a replacement doctor but he ain't no Dewdrop."

"As for you lil' lady" He pointed a hoof at me accusingly. "I realise you've been bedridden da' past few days with all them injuries an' what not, but you've been suck'n up a lot o' our medical reserves without do'n much ta replace em. Fact is Dewdrop was da' only thing keep'n our little town here healthy." He shook his head forlornly. "She was a whiz at alchemy could whip up healing potions, an' medical supplies out da' mos' bizarre things." Drifting his gaze off of me he looked at Patch. "No offense young'n yer good jus' not as good as her. I'd really like ta find out what happened ta her, if she's alive I'd like her ta come back... If'n she's not... Give her a proper burial. I don't want those things getting a hold of anyponies bodies live or dead."

Scratching the back of his head the old buck sighed. "I guess what I'm try'n ta ask fur is if'n you'd be willing ta look fur our miss'n doctor pony. I'll give you this Pipbuck 3000 if you'd be willing ta take up da' job." He pulled a worn Pipbuck out of the satchel on his side. "What da' ya say?"

I'd only ever seen a Pipbuck once before; back when my sister got into the Enclave they gave her one to use until she was trained to use power armor. So of course how could I possibly turn down the offer to be just like her.

"I have a few questions to ask before she just jumps on this wonderful opportunity." Patch interjected giving me a weary look. "You might want to wipe the drool from your mouth there Silva."

He turned back to Brine "Do you have any specific leads we can follow so that we don't wind up wondering blindly around this tropical death trap? Secondly how dangerous is it out there? She clearly doesn't have a clue and neither do I. I'd rather like to know what sorts of threats were liable to face before running into them. Thirdly you expect two unarmed, unprepared, naive ponies to go into a jungle filled with who knows what? One of which, I remind you, is still recovering from her injuries."

Scratching his chin Brine looked Patch squarely in the eyes "So what yer try'n da' say is that you'll be need'n a bit more ta whet yer appetites? We'll I can toss in two hundred caps in as well. that

should cover da' cost of basic equipment. As for da' islands dangers, there are far too many ta count. All I can do is tell ya good luck an' if'n ya see somethin' what look like can kick yer sorry hide run as fast as yer hooves can carry ya till they can no more. that's mah final offer." A wicked grin slowly crept across his face "O'course she could jus' pay off her debt to da' village instead. I'm sure Shark Bate needs new girl down at da' bar. She's very exotic so she's bound ta get loads o' customers that way." Putting his hoof down. "As I said earlier, Everypony plays their part round here."

Sighing he closed his eyes "I'd like it better if ya jus' wen' look'n fur Dewdrop though. I can't send what lil' armed ponies this town has into da' wilds of da' jungle. Specially not after we spotted a pack o' Cyberdogs near by. That'd be jus' ask'n em to attack us."

Well that ruined my fantasy. "Sorry but there's no way I'm gonna turn tricks like some washed up show pony. Plus this job rings of sweet adventure and probably involves less diseases too." Mostly though I just wanted that Pipbuck.

Patch turned to look at me, his mouth opened then closed then opened again. "Fine... We should be able to at least buy some sort of protection with this I hope it'll be enough... I wonder what the bit to cap conversion rate is any way."

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After making our way out of the rust bucket we made for the collection of scrape stalls that passed for a town market. We quickly found our selves trying to negotiate the price of two sets of very worn leather armor, a base ball bat, and kitchen knife, with a rather worn, one-eyed, old griffin by the name of Geldnir. Unfortunately it wasn't going very well for us.

Geldnir yawned, looking down at us from what looked like a rather worn, red couch that was perched on top of his stall. You know the kind of couch you might expect to see in a psychiatrists office. A little pony in my head wondered where in the wasteland he had found something like that...

"Look mates, I can't bring the price of all this below two hundred fifteen caps. The price for the armor alone is two hundred. If you want me to toss in the weapons for free you'll have to earn em."

Patch tried arguing. "But we're going to look for Dewdrop. We need proper weapons if we're to venture out into the jungle. Otherwise we probably don't stand much of chance."

Geldnir sighed, and stretched on the couch. "Look mate I sympathise I really do, and I'd appreciate having Dewdrop back in town, but I need to be able to bring food back to the nest, I've got chicks to feed, and I can't afford to cut you a deal unless you do something for me to offset the loss. I've got just the thing if you'd give me the chance to tell ya." He said while looking over one of his clawed hands.

This time before Patch could open his mouth for a rebuttal I put hoof in it. "Go on."

Patch gave me dry look before spitting out my hoof "B-but..." he tried to interject before I shoved my other hoof in his mouth.

"Hush now! We haven't even heard what the nice griffin wants us to do yet!" I said returning his dry look with one of my own, earning a chuckle from Geldnir.

“Well now, I think we’re getting somewhere!” The griffin merchant grinned, perching himself on the edge of his sofa. “Here’s what I need you to do. I need Coconut Spider eggs for my inventory. They’re a potent reagent used in making several different potions, a lot of my zebra customers use ‘em and I can turn quite a profit selling ‘em.” He patted a large sack of caps next to his perch “If you’d be willing to get me some I’d be willing to offer you a substantial discount. Get me ten and I’ll give a five percent discount, any after the first ten I’ll buy from you for 5 caps each. How does that sound for a fair deal?”

Patch bulked causing me to giggle. “Sounds fine to me! Just one question my fine feathered friend. What exactly is a coconut spider?”

The only thing my imagination could conjure up were images of coconuts with eight legs wandering around blindly which, while hilarious was probable far from the truth. I fully expected reality had something far nastier in store.

Geldnir grimaced “Nasty little blighters. Imagine if you can, large, hairy legs, and massive, jagged, venomous fangs with an exoskeleton as hard as granite.” Realizing the horrified looks on our faces he quickly corrected “You shouldn’t have to fight any though they tend to leave their egg sacks unguarded.”

Reality one, Imagination zilch.

Geldnir offered us this bit of advice before we suited up and moved out “The best way to avoid them is to fly. Failing that avoid palm, and coconut tree’s as much as possible. Those happen to be their favored hunting spots. They usually lay their eggs somewhere near the base of ‘em so as long as you don’t touch the trees you should be a-okay.”

“That’s it we’re doomed.” Patch moaned

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Footnote: Level Up!

New Perk: Daddies Lil’ Filly (rank 2): You take after your dad +5 repair +5 science.

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