

War. but the sound of  
the bar was



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

War.

It never changed. After the bombs fell, and the world was bathed in atomic fire, it was still the same as before. Men and women from all walks of life, needing something for them and their families; and more often than not, they'd take it if they couldn't find it. This was the life in the wasteland, when not plagued by raiders, the various settlements and cities would be under different threats; everything from " Would the crops be good this year?" and " Need to fix that lousy water purifier.

", to " Are Deathgators, and Deathclaws gonna try and break down the gates again?" These problems plagued most settlements in the wasteland, across this former great nation, but the latter problem was quite large in the Southeastern commonwealth of the United States. The year of 2290, a very warm year for the former states of South Carolina, North Carolina, and Georgia. A hot wind whips against the wall of the bar, even though it is getting toward the end of dusk, the air wasn't cooling down much, and the heat of July was intense under normal circumstances, but this year it was hotter.

The bar's main room was far from unoccupied, but the sound of the bar was near dead silent, apart from the quiet sounds of people enjoying their drinks. White, cracking plaster walls contrasted with the slightly dusty, Hickory floor. No windows were in the old, misshapen frames; and the door was on its last legs as it creaked open once more. A man, who couldn't have been more than twenty, silently stepped through the door frame, scanning the patrons

of the bar with his light green eyes; a slight look of nervousness dancing through them.

Sharp facial features and a long, thin nose almost like a beak, characterized his face. His hair, sandy blonde, fell against his shoulders. His body, thin and lithe, was draped in chainmail, a gorget, and pauldrons rested on his torso, tinges of rust on the edges that look as if they're been previously fought away; while jeans and some metal leg guards were strapped tight to his thighs. Leather boots held firm on his feet, appearing to be patched and rugged.

A battered, but well taken care of Remington model 8 rifle was slung over his shoulder, while an almost pristine, and out of place looking, long sword sat on his hip. As if he was from some sort of wasteland fairytale." Greetings..." I said quietly as everyone turned to look at him, scanning him over and scowling, before slowly turning back to their drinks, deciding that this man was not worth their anger.

The man relaxed as he made his way to the counter, placing some caps down and politely asking for a beer. The bartender scowled and handed him a beer. " You've a lot of nerve coming to this town. After what your knightly lot did to us way back when." The bartender, an older black man with a full beard and large belly.

" Y'all from up in the Camdenian Kingdom shouldn't be allowed anywhere near us down here." I sighed, not wanting to incur the bartender's anger. " I'm sorry that you feel that way. I wasn't part of the battle of Charleston Rail, but I heard it was brutal from my parents." He says as he takes a sip from his

beer. " I'm not looking for trouble though, just wanted a drink. I'm not part of the knightly order anymore, so no worries about trouble from me; or at least none that started by me.

" The bartender nods, and looks him over. " Well...as long as your caps are comin' then the beer is too." His expression softening slightly as their exchange happens once more. I silently sip my drink for a while, looking around at the other patrons, and then back to the bartender.

" Do you happen to know of any work available..... um.." I trail off, realizing I don't know the name of the barkeep, " Where are my manners? I'm Asher Mathis." I say flashing a warm smile at the man. The bartender huffs, grabbing a cloth and absentmindedly wiping the counter as he thinks. After a few minutes, he speaks.

" Well.... if you goes down that street there by the east gate, on the left is Marissa's Doctor Office. I think she's been lookin' for a merc or two to help her with some kind of job." He gives a short shrug and then shakes his head. " I guess she doesn't like livin' here in Lockwood, I think she's movin' her practice someplace else. Would ya like another beer?" The bartender asks expectantly as he finishes talking. Much to his surprise, I stand up and begin to head for the door, much to the relief of the bartender. A few of the other patrons shift in their seats as I walk past them, armor shifting and clinking softly.

The warm wind of the night blowing in once more as the door opens and I stride out into the street. The cracked asphalt street is lit poorly by several small neon signs above a brothel and a few stores, along with a few jury-

rigged streetlights. I look left and then right, checking for threats as I start toward the east end of the town. Sounds of loud arguing, parties, fighting, and screwing coming from several alleyways. I let out a noise of disgust as I quickly walks past these alleys, speaking under my breath as I attempt to navigate the mazelike mess of a town. “ No wonder the elders tried to purge this place. It doesn’t seem that productive, nor safe. A mess of greed it seems.

” That was Lockwood. On the southern end of the wrecked city of Charleston, was Lockwood. A town made of several walled off streets, protecting the inhabitants from the raiders, Sandwood Mercenary company, and the Deathclaws and Deathgators; all stalking the flooded and unflooded streets of east and central Charleston. In the south, you still weren’t safe; Bloodbugs, Mirelurks, and more crawled through the radioactive marshes, looking for prey.