

It didn't take long for us to find a gun shop in the market area. In fact, we quickly found that there were three to choose from, and they were quite clearly advertised. Two of them had large shoddily painted signs above their doors, but one of them had a sign taken from an actual pre-war gun store, hoisted above their front window and entrance. To be honest, the fact that they had a front window was just as eye-catching, as large panes of glass were understandably rare in the wasteland.

Once we located the stores, we peeked inside each one. The first shop was more focused on laser and energy weapons, and it honestly didn't have the best selection. Perhaps it was because Megaton itself didn't have any big spenders, but they only had two laser rifles, and both of them were visibly aged, though admittedly well cleaned and maintained. The rest of their stock was clearly not in the best condition either.

I left Joseph in there to talk shop with the owner, and ogle at some of the weapons, while Carlos and I continued on. Madison stayed behind as well, since I didn't want any of my soldiers to ever go anywhere alone outside of the HQ.

The second shop, the one with the large scavenged sign, was perhaps the largest store of the three, but I almost immediately realized I wouldn't be selling much of anything there. It wasn't what they had for sale, as the stock was decent, and the variety was good as well. It wasn't the pair of guards that stood by the entrance, weapons in hand, ready to stop anyone with any bright ideas. That was normal considering the setting and the store's merchandise.

What killed it for me, between the clerk's fake smile and the high prices, was how immediately apparent it was that these people were looking for any payoff they could find, whether it was tricking people into buying more than they needed under the guise of a deal, or by purchasing goods for far below their worth. The whole operation read like a used-car sales lot, where salesmen try to max out their sales at the customer's expense.

After a few minutes of looking around, we excused ourselves and headed to the last place, where we finally found what we were looking for. Behind the counter was an older man, maybe twice my age, or even a bit more. He took one look at Carlos and I and smiled, his eyes locking onto the weapons we had on our hips and on our backs.

"Well, isn't that interesting?" he said, leaning forward on the salvage glass display counter at the corner of the room. "I can tell by your outfit that you're not from around here. Hell, I don't recognize a single bit of your kit. Would you mind letting an old man look at your weapon? I'm sure it's not for sale, but an old man has his curiosity."

I nodded towards Carlos, who pulled his rifle off his back and placed it on the counter. The man purposely stopped Carlos from unloading it before fiddling with it for a minute, managing to eject the magazine and the round in the chamber on his own.

"Hmm... similar to the [Marksman Carbine](#)... and the [Assault Carbine](#)... Maybe even that custom rifle the NCR is using, think they call that their [Serving Rifle](#)?" He guessed, turning the weapon over in his hands, looking down the sight with the weapon pointed at the floor. "Never

seen one of those, just heard it described by a traveling merchant. This baby is new, almost brand new.”

He placed the weapon on the counter, and Carlos took it back, expertly reloading it before slinging it over his shoulder.

“You know your stuff,” I said with a smile. “Better than what I saw with your neighbors.”

“Eh, don’t blame it on the boy behind the counter, it’s not his shop, he just works for the owner,” he waves me off. “He’s an okay kid, just learning from the wrong guy. What can I do for you, though? I get the feeling you’re not here to buy?”

“Nope, here to sell,” I confirmed, lifting up the bag full of firearms and carefully laying them out on the table. “Been clearing a lot of safes lately from some offices, found some guns in near-perfect condition.”

“Oh yeah, always a market for the good stuff,” He said, putting his hands on the bag. “Everything cleared?”

“Mags pulled and chambers empty,” I confirmed with a nod. “There shouldn’t be any ammo in that bag.”

“Good, can’t tell you how nice it is to deal with someone who knows proper gun safety...”

The shop owner started going through the bag, pulling out each pistol and clearing it himself with a practiced hand, before laying them out on the counter. When he had emptied the bag, including the magazines, he handed me the bag back, nodding at what he saw.

“These are in good shape, though considering where they are from, that’s not surprising,” He admitted, tapping his lip as he considered the deal. “I’ll have to look them over closer, but... I would be amenable to a fifty caps per pistol, as a group deal.”

I looked over the guns on the table, frowning for a moment. While fifty caps was likely a decent deal for the five .32 pistols, everything else was worth well over that.

“I think a hundred and twenty-five per would be closer to acceptable,” I responded. “How often do you get such high-quality stock?”

“Hmm... That’s too high. What about sixty?”

“Eighty.”

The owner rubbed his chin for a moment before nodding and reaching over the counter with his hand.

“Alright, I can do that. Let me go over each of them, make sure there aren’t any issues, then I can get you your caps.

I smiled and shook his hand, watching as he started to examine each firearm in detail. Once he was finished with one of the 10mm pistols, I spoke up again.

"Would you be able to keep up with semi-consistent deliveries like these?" I asked, catching his attention.

"Of good-quality small arms like these?" He asked, raising an eyebrow at me, before picking up another pistol. "This batch alone will last for a good two or three months. People who come here know what they are looking for, but there are still only so many sales in a day."

"What about larger weapons?" I asked. "Something potentially at this level of quality?"

"If we were talking some sort of found cache, something with decent quality?" He asked, looking at me again. "I would be able to round up a few people interested, maybe get a shipment going around the nearby settlements. Depending on the size of the cache, I could handle it. It would take some planning, though, for you to get your caps."

"Alright. I'll keep that in mind," I said.

"You got the location of something like that?" He asked, raising an eyebrow. "I might know some people who could help uncover that."

"I think we can handle it," I assured him, the man shrugging in response.

I gestured for Carlos to stay behind and wait for the man to finish inspecting the weapons so that he could collect the payment. When I exited the shop, I ordered John to head in and stick with Carlos, before Leon and I headed back to the shop where I left Joseph and Madison. After getting their attention, Madison was sent back to wait with Carlos and John, while Joseph followed along behind me. Once everyone was set, we headed off to see Moria Brown at the Craterside Supply.

"So you really think she will be able to tell you when we are?" Joseph asked quietly. "The way you described her, she seemed a little... Unreliable."

"She's involved with the town enough to know some rumors, and her age might actually just be enough. Plus, the Lone Wanderer comes through her shop frequently," I pointed out. "If they live here, they will have had to talk to her. If not, there's a chance they were through here anyway. If she isn't any help, then there are other places to stop."

Joseph nodded, and together we entered the quasi-familiar store. The interior, as they often seemed to be, was drastically different from what I remembered. First, the entire shop was considerably better lit, so I could clearly see both Moria and the guard leaning against the wall a half-dozen feet away. The shop was also filled with shelving and cabinets, displaying boxes of food, containers, ammo boxes, armor, weapons, some tools, and just about everything else you could imagine. None of it was top quality, but all of it was in good enough shape to sell.

Behind the front counter was the woman herself. She had high cheekbones, an oil-streaked chin, and red hair pulled back in a ponytail. It was hard to tell, but she might actually

look slightly younger than I would have expected. Unfortunately, the change was minor enough that I couldn't decide if it was just a side effect of going from an old 3D model to an actual person. Either way, she smiled as we stepped inside.

"Well, hello! Looks like the new faces came to visit!" She said happily. "My name is Moria Brown. I heard about a group of mercenaries coming in, looking to sell some goods. You still looking to sell, or are you looking to buy?"

"That depends on whether you have what I'm looking for," I explained, approaching the counter. "I've heard that you can get some undersuits, like vault suit style, with added protection. Have you heard of anything like that?"

"Indeed, I have! It's not uncommon to find reinforced Vault Suits for their security teams," She explained with a smile. "I believe I have a few boxes of them from Vault 113, to the west. A trader came by and offloaded them to me for cheap."

"How well do they work?" I asked.

"Well... they are more knife-proof than bullet-proof," She admitted. "It's not much, but every little bit counts!"

I frowned and considered the idea. Even having a knife-proof undersuit was useful, so depending on the price, it would probably be worth it.

"I should also point out that all Vault suits are designed with temperature-regulating materials, keeping you cool in the heat and warm in the cold," she added with an excited look. "In fact, I use a normal pair as pajamas! Not to mention they are rad resistant, and that can mean a lot when you're traveling the Capital Wasteland!"

That was an interesting combination, and definitely worth looking into. I was frankly very nervous about running into radiation, not just because I had a growing suspicion that it somehow worked differently here than on my own earth.

"How many do you have?" I asked, leaning on her counter.

"Oh, well, I would have to check," she said, stepping out around the counter. "Give me just a moment!"

The high-energy woman scuttled off, leaving us alone with her guard, who was silently watching us, and had been for the entire time. After nearly a minute, Moria returned with another radiant smile.

"Seems like I have three boxes, so forty-five suits," She declared. "I could give you all three for... two hundred and twenty-five caps."

"That sounds reasonable."

She nodded, clapped her hands, and rushed back around the corner. After a moment, she returned with three boxes, carefully carrying them back to the counter. As she was pulling

out some sort of record book, I pushed one of the boxes towards Joseph for him to examine. As he cracked the box open, I focused back on Moria.

"While you're doing that, I actually have a question you might be able to answer," I said, the excited woman pausing as she flipped through her logbook.

"Oh! Well, I'm always happy to help someone satisfy their curiosity," she said with a smile, flipping through a few more pages. "What's on your mind?"

"I know there is a Vault nearby. I was wondering if you had heard someone from that vault coming through here," I asked. "A Vault community could mean a lot of fair trade, and getting a feel for their current status might help that along."

"Hmmm, someone from Vault 101?" she asked, tapping her chin as she thought. "Can't say I've heard anything like that. Pretty sure that vault is all locked up tight! Which is a shame, as I'm sure they have so much they could teach us!"

"You'd be surprised," I muttered before giving her an encouraging smile. "Thank you, I appreciate the help."

The shop owner happily accepted our caps before we put the boxes of jumpsuits into our bags. They weren't nearly as heavy as our first load, so it didn't slow us down in the least.

"Before we leave," I said as we packed up. "That bomb in the center of town... is it real?"

"Indeed it is!" she said with another blinding smile. "Word of advice, stay out of the water around it unless you have some spare Radaway!"

"Could it go off?"

"Oh, heavens no!" She said, hand on her heart. "The detonator and high explosive compactor were removed while the town was being built. The Children of Atom worship the radioactive core inside it! That and the spicy water I mentioned."

"That's a relief," I admitted, giving the woman a smile. "Thank you for the information."

"And thank you for your business!" Moria called out after us as we left the shop, our caps sitting in a pile on her counter. "Be careful out there, and try not to die!"

Once the door closed behind us, we made our way back around to pick up the rest of my soldiers.

"I feel tired having just listened to you talk to her," Joseph admitted. "Are you satisfied with what she told you?"

"Mostly," I said with a nod. "I'll ask a few guards on the way out. They would likely hear about the vault opening up after so long. And honestly, my biggest, immediate concern was whether we needed to worry about the nuke. If that's disarmed, then when we are becomes a question we can answer over time, rather than an immediate problem."

As we returned to the market space, Carlos and John were coming out from the gun store, their packs laden with caps. Counting the caps we just spent on jumpsuits, we had made just over four thousand caps in total, an astounding amount considering what we made from Adam, which just went to show how important knowing what people would buy was.

Unfortunately, despite having finished selling our goods, there was no way we were leaving. The sun was already starting to set, and I absolutely refused to take my soldiers out in the dark unless it was life or death. As the hanging lights around town started to flicker on, I turned around and began looking for somewhere to stay for the night.