



A Barren Wasteland

Crunch, crunch, crunch.

Lucy's shoes echoed as they crushed the rubble and dirt of the Wasteland's barren dirt path. The sun struggled to pierce the haze of ash and radiation, casting a haunting yellow-orange glow over the desolate landscape. Skyscrapers that once teemed with life years ago now stood as decaying silhouettes against the sky, their hollowed frames a monument to a civilization lost to despair.

She squinted through the dusty air, narrowing her eyes as she tried to distinguish the faded words on a billboard in the distance.

"Shady Sands, huh? About time," she muttered, pausing to catch her breath.

Shady Sands, a once prospering city that served as the capital of the New California Republic, was now a ghostly reminder of the old world. What has been a beacon of hope for humanity, with flourishing crops, a proper irrigation system, homes, and even shopping malls, was now just a haunting shell of its former self. Just another tragic example of the devastation of war. A depressing reality for the future of mankind.

A Scavenger's Burden

Lucy adjusted the weathered straps of her pack, its weight pressing into her shoulders. Inside was gear that kept her alive - tools, weapons, scavenged goods, food, water, and the precious resources she's found along her journey. She'd never ventured this deeply into the Wasteland before, but with resources and essentials running low back at the trading outpost in Filly, she didn't have a choice. If she didn't bring something of value back to barter with, it would be another miserable week of radroach meat and dirty water.

While her journey had been harsh and exhausting, it was also surprisingly fruitful. Among the rubble and the dirt of the Wasteland, Lucy found quite the jackpot of items from the old world: old jewelry made of real gold and silver - scratched and tarnished, but perfect for melting into bullets; a bundle of plant leaves that somehow managed to flourish despite the radioactive air and toxic water; and even a single, old, leather boot. The latter, however, came with an unwelcome surprise - a severed, bloody foot still jammed inside.

Many more items were jumbled within her oversized pack. The Wasteland was usually unforgiving, but the weight of her oversized pack gave her hope for the upcoming week. There was a promise of survival and a decent trade at the outpost. This grueling, awful day would be worth it in the end.

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A Desperate Fight

The creature spread its wings and dove straight towards her.

Panic gripped her body. She immediately raised her pistol and fired. The crack of the gunshots reverberated in her ears, her heart pounding faster with each bullet. Adrenaline surged through her veins, fueling her plea to stay alive. One bullet, two, three, four, five. The creature faltered, but it didn't fall.

Lucy staggered backwards, tripping over a chunk of wreckage behind her. She tumbled to the ground, her pistol flying out of reach. The creature shook off the previous hits, and charged again.

Desperate, she grabbed the nearest object her hands could find: an old skateboard, long abandoned by the pre-war world. With both hands, she gripped the skateboard, and swung the creature with all her strength. The impact sent the creature crashing to the ground. She struck it again, and again, and again, until it was no longer moving.

Panting heavily, Lucy stared at the lifeless creature. She eyed the battered skateboard beside the creature's corpse. A wry smile crept onto her face.

"Y'know what? Why not?" she muttered, crouching to pick it up. She shoved it into her pack, took a deep breath to steady herself, and continued her journey back to Filly.

The Trade

By the time Lucy reached the trading outpost, dusk had begun to settle over the Wasteland. Filly was a fragmented settlement pieced together by survivors using the scraps of whatever remained in the greater Los Angeles area. Lucy greeted the guards at the entrance with a tired wave, and headed straight for Ma June's shop.

The old trader sat behind a counter piled high with scavenged trinkets and useful resources. She was cleaning her shotgun, her sharp eyes glancing up as Lucy approached.

"What've you got for me today, Lucy?" Ma June asked, her voice as weathered as the Wasteland itself.

Lucy set her pack down, and began unloading all of her new trinkets: the jewelry, the skateboard, the single boot, the plant leaves, and every other odd item she'd scavenged. Ma June set the shotgun aside, her interest piqued as she leaned over to inspect each item.

"Well, now, this is a decent haul." Ma June said with a chuckle, turning over the jewelry in her hands.

"It wasn't easy," Lucy replied, pride creeping into her voice. "But I hope it'll be worth the trouble."

Ma June took her time, carefully examining each item. Finally, she looked up and said, "How does 250 caps sound for all of this?" She tossed a sack of bottle caps onto the counter.

"Make it 300," Lucy countered, folding her arms.

Ma June smirked. "275. Final offer."

Lucy sighed, "You're killing me, but alright. 275 it is." She extended her hand, and the deal was sealed with a firm handshake.

Hope Within the Wasteland

As she waved goodbye to Ma June, wishing her luck until next time, Lucy couldn't help but smile. In the old world, the items she'd scavenged - and the bottle caps she'd traded them for - would've meant nothing. Back then, people had the luxury of ignoring the value of such trivial things. But here, in the Wasteland, these relics of a bygone era were now the key to her survival. It was an odd reality to come to terms with.

The thought lingered as she made her way back to her living quarters. Relieved to be back in what she considered home for now, she thought about the Wasteland and the ruins around her. They were battered, but unbroken, just like her. She was determined to stand strong, no matter how hard the Wasteland tried to tear her down.

Nouran Badawy



A font that displays the resources of the Wasteland. Rugged and distressed; the remnants of the old world.

The trivial items of today might be the key to your survival later. The future is unknown. Don't ignore the items that seem so insignificant.

