

THE MORE, THE MERRIER

A Fallout 4 Tale

By Z.o.B. Industries



“Crawl out through the fallout, baby... When they drop that bomb...”

Cait put her beer down on the bar in the Combat Zone. “Tommy, would you turn that shite off? All Travis ever plays is the same five songs, over and over! It’s givin’ me a headache...”

The Ghoul owner of the Combat Zone walked down the bar, and switched off the wood-panelled radio at its end. Cait’s head slumped back down onto the bar, the peace and quiet now only broken by the rowdy sounds of Raiders drinking, fighting and fucking behind her.

“Cait, honey,” said Tommy, wiping his desiccated hands on a dishtowel, “don’t you think it’s time you paid your tab and left? You’ve been here three days, and... Well, you could use a shave and a shower. I’m just saying.”

The Irish boxer belched and shoved her empty beer stein towards him. “Nah, I’d rather keep drinkin’ if it’s all the same t’you.” She pounded her chest **“BRULLLCH.”**

Tommy sighed. He liked the girl, he really did—she’d once won him a fortune in customers, before that damn Vault dweller happened along and blew away his clientele. But now that the Dweller had moved on, things were back to normal. The Combat Zone was a blood-soaked playground again, Tommy was rolling in caps... and Cait was sinking back into her old, drunken ways.

As her friend, he felt for her—but as a businessman? She needed to go, *yesterday*. Cait’s bingeing had grown so extreme that for the first time in her debauched life, she’d actually grown a beer belly. It bulged under her corset and sagged slightly between her legs, swollen with Gwinnet Pale Ale and sloshing painfully whenever she moved.

“Look. Cait. I’d love to keep you here, but... You know it ain’t up to me.” He nodded at the Raiders, who were currently taking bets on whether they could shoot off a sleeping man’s ear without killing him. “These guys are animals. You pass out here, the place ain’t safe for you. Why don’t you go on down to Diamond City, sleep it off a bit?”

Cait blinked. For a moment, this sounded like a good idea... and then she remembered Piper lived in Diamond City. Piper, whose urchin charm had stolen Nora’s heart away from her. Piper, whose goddamn newspaper ran articles about the “evils of drugs” and implied Cait was a sex worker.

“Nah. I’m good right here.” And she fished a bottle of vodka from behind the bar, and began taking shots.

Tommy tried to grab it away from her, but she swung at him and knocked a chunk out of the wooden supports of the Zone’s theater seating. Tommy backed away, his hair askew.

“Alright, alright! Jesus, go ahead and drink yourself to death. I was just trying to help.”

“Don’t need help,” slurred the red-headed Irishwoman, tossing back the vodka like it was water. “Need drinksss.” Her corset strained against her gut, and she felt the mighty need to piss. Hell, why not just do it right here? Piss her pants in front of everybody. That would show the stupid Vault-dwelling bitch who’d run off on her with Piper. *Piss off Cait and you get a barstool covered in piss. Makes a damn good slogan, that does.* “**Hwuorrp.**”

The door to the Combat Zone opened, and Raiders looked up curiously. Their laughter and chatter subsided as a melodious voice with a French accent floated across the club.

“Allo! Please, I am in need of assistance. Is there anyone ‘oo might help me?”

Cait blinked at the apparition, clad in a white T-shirt and jeans. Without even any armor, the woman was a willowy, pixie-haired brunette who looked out of place... and out of place meant vulnerable. Raiders were getting up, reaching for their knives.

The girl with the French accent stepped towards them, extending a hand. “Gentlemen! Would any of you fine people be able to ‘elp me find my friend?”

The answers were many and colorful.

“Piss off, skank!”

“I’ll pahk my shiv up y’asshole!”

“Nah, bring ‘er over, I need some a’ those tits!”

Alarmed, the girl backed away. Just as a few of the bigger Raiders were approaching her, Cait stood up and slammed her bottle down.

“Oi. Get away from her, you half-pints.”

The men turned toward her. One was wearing a sack-cloth mask, the other a terrifying gas mask with glass lenses. “What are you gonna do if we don’t?”

She stumbled off her stool... and then broke the glass over the bar. Brandishing the broken bottle, she hiccuped. “Might be drunk but... I’m pretty sure I c’n cut your dicks off without much trouble. Come on, try me, lads!”

The pair of Raiders backed down. Pissed as she was, they still didn’t want a fight with Cait the Fist. She was renowned for being a brutal, dirty cage-fighter who would happily punch your dangly parts up into your stomach if you gave her a chance. And even Raiders weren’t crazy enough to tangle with that.

“There. Problem sholved.” Cait wobbled over to the quailing brunette, stifling a belch. “Hey there**oRRRRPp**, my name’s Cait. Who’re you?”

“I am Curie,” said the delicate-looking girl, holding her nose. “My, but you have been drinking. A lot.”

“Damn straight.” She swayed, patting her impressive stomach. “It’s the only thing I’m good at—might as well do it. You said yer friend is in... HIC, trouble?”

Curie nodded. “She ‘as disappeared! I do not know what to do. I confess I am out of my element here, but I have nowhere else to turn! Mayor Piper said I am a ‘filthy synth’ and she wants nothing to do with me.”

Cait blinked. *A synth, eh?* “Well... Who cares if yer a robot, love. Cait’s here, never fear. What happened to yer friend?”

The short-haired woman wrung her hands. “It is my friend, *mademoiselle* Cait! The Vault Dweller! She ‘as vanished, and I do not know what to do! Please, will you ‘elp me?”

Cait sobered up by several degrees, instantly. She knew exactly who Curie was talking about—that *slut* from Sanctuary Hills. The one who had befriended her, helped her kick her Psycho habit... and then run off with the most obnoxious do-gooder in Diamond City. For a moment, she considered tossing Curie out the door onto her perky French ass. It wouldn’t be the first time she had turned down a job because someone she’d fucked was involved.

But beyond being her lover, the Sole Survivor was her *friend*. They’d shared all sorts of hyper-violent adventures together. And even though she suspected Curie was yet another notch on Nora’s bedpost, she decided that any chance to see her ex-lover again was worth it.

“Okay, girl. I’ll *hurrrp* help you find your friend.” She put an arm around Curie’s waist, admiring the girl’s waspish figure. If Nora had notched her bedpost with *this* naïve little treat, she kind of couldn’t blame her for it. The woman actually smelled like perfume! Who the hell had perfume, in the Commonwealth? “But first... We gotta have a few drinks. I never work with anyone *hic!* Sober.”

They pulled up two stools amid the chaos of the Zone, and Curie began to tell her tale of woe.

Piper put her feet up on McDonough’s desk, her fingers deep in a box of Power Noodles. The warm, slightly radioactive meal was her third of the evening—stress eating had begun to worm its way into the new Mayor’s life already.

There was so much work to do in this office, more than she’d ever expected when she ran for Mayor. No wonder McDonough had been so portly. She herself was struggling every morning with a spare tire that flopped over her belt—getting fat should have been an impossibility in the Commonwealth, but when resources flowed upward to you and sleep was scarce because of overwork... Well, Piper the Troublemaker was becoming Piper the Muffin-Topped.

It really bothered her. After the incident with McDonough, she needed people to trust her image. Besides, she wasn’t corrupt. She might have taken a few small “kick-backs” from Diamond City Surplus to look the other way about their rate hikes, but that was the price of keeping the City’s economy strong. And yes, she’d had a few Deathclaw Egg omelettes from Wellington, in exchange for ignoring his... well, his trade in Deathclaw eggs. But she wasn’t corrupt. Far from it.

“Geneva, honey, can you get me some more Cram? Here, use some of McDonough’s stash.” She handed her secretary a handful of caps, and sent her on her way, tempted to slap her ass as the skinny blonde wiggled out the door. Without Nora around, Piper was a *thirsty* girl. Not bi, just... Really, really curious.

“Right. Where was I... Ah yes. Trading reports.” She slurped on more Nuka-Cola Victory, belching softly as she shuffled through the papers. Really, things in Diamond City were turning up. The whole city was improving in the wake of the Institute’s destruction—and she was sitting pretty on top of it all. What a life.

Just then, Geneva came scurrying back in. “Ms. Mayor... We have, ah, someone here to see you.”

She frowned. “Is it Deezer again? Tell him we don’t want any more lemonade. The last shipment was so sugar-heavy it popped off half the buttons on my coat.”

“No, miss. It’s... uh, it’s Cait.”

“Shit.” She dropped the papers on her desk. Cait was a drunken, debauched troublemaker, basically a Raider with no allegiances. Nora used to pal around with her a lot, but it hadn’t improved the Irishwoman’s bad attitude. “If we turn her away she’ll probably start hitting people. Show her inside, please.”

When Cait staggered in, the stench of booze around her made Piper wrinkle her nose. Cait was not a sweet-smelling person normally, and the cloud of vodka fumes coating her made her even less so. Not to mention, she had gotten *fat* since Piper last saw her. A swollen, sagging beer-gut bobbed and shook beneath her corset. Her upper arms jiggled, and her pants were split in several places.

“Piper! *Hic*. Good to see ya. Guess who I brought?” She hauled a similarly drunk companion into the office, and Piper blinked.

“Curie? Are you... are you okay?”

The waifish synth was grinning, her eyes bleary with alcohol, and swaying. “Yesssh, *mademoishell* Piper. I am... *Hic!* I am *hic*, doing jush lovely. Where is your bathroom, *si’vous plait?*”

“Uh... That way.” Curie stumbled down the hall and Piper stood, her impressive middle jutting out over the desk. “Cait, what’s this about? Did you get Curie drunk?”

“What? Nooo.” Cait blew hair out of her eyes. “Well, yes. But tha’s not the point, love. Our sexy little robot lass has come to us with an *emergency*. Nora’s gone and vanished!”

“Blue’s gone?” Piper frowned. Her girlfriend, the sole survivor of Vault 81, was a mysterious person by nature. She often vanished for long periods, coming back with tales of violence and adventure. But she had been gone a while this time—so long that Piper had taken to stress-bingeing without Nora’s strong arms to hold her at night. “Well. She does that sometimes. It’s a hero thing.”

“Yeah? Well, Curie says... One sec.” Cait tottered behind the filing cabinets, and Piper winced as retching noises and splattering sounded. Cait waddled back, wiping vomit off her lips and washing the taste out with a flask of whiskey. “*Gllg... glug...* Ahh, thas’ good. As I was saying, Curie says she saw Nora poking around some old vault in Nuka-World. Some kind of soda experiment, she says.”

Piper grunted. Some months ago, Nora had single-handedly liberated Nuka-World from Raiders, slaughtering every single one of them in a bloodbath that some claimed had taken days. Since then, odd objects had been pouring in from the park—toys, experimental weapons, and strange blue tickets. “Are you sure she isn’t just looting? She does like her junk.”

“Nah, Curie says... BRULLGCH.” Cait belched, leaning over the table, and Piper gagged on the odor. “Curie says she got *locked inside*. Her Pip-Boy let her in, and the door shut behind her and... and

she's trapped in there. Or summat. I wasn't really listening." She punched Piper in the shoulder. "What d'you say, shutterbug? I can't find her on my own, not with this little pantywaist backing me up." She jerked a thumb at Curie, who had emerged from the bathroom with pants around her ankles.

Piper sighed, walking over to Curie and hauling up her trousers. Curie leaned on her as the new Mayor buttoned her pants, giggling in her ear. Up close, Curie smelled like flowers and cleaning solution, an odd mix. "Well, I can't do anything until you two sober up. Did you ask Nick Valentine for help?"

"He told me to sod off." Cait waved a hand dismissively. "He thinks I've gone soft! Pissant robot. I bet he gets less action than a toaster."

"I mean... he's not wrong." Piper straightened Curie and nodded at Cait's stomach. "You are looking a little bit *sturdy*, lately."

"What? This... This is *ballast!*" Cait farted loudly, slapping her stomach. "For... for combat purposes."

Piper rolled her eyes. If Nick wasn't taking the case, that did narrow their options. If she didn't help, Cait's only other options were MacCready or maybe Strong. McCready was too damned expensive, and she didn't trust Strong one bit. With Cait's belly the size of a keg, he was as likely to *eat* her as help her. "I'll help you. But first I need you to go find that robot Nora's always tinkering with. What's her name... Ada?"

Cait snapped to attention, saluting. "Ma'am, yes ma'am! I'm on the case."

"And get yourself a Nuka down at Takahashi's. Your breath smells like gasoline."

Cait shrugged. "Just because you can't handle a real woman..." Watching her jiggle her way out the door, Piper's eyes narrowed. Cait's belly wasn't the only thing that had grown in recent times. That ass, in Cait's tight pants, was like a couple of overweight mole-rats fighting in a sack together. It was kind of fascinating.

A rescue mission with a drunk synth and a fat cage-fighter... How do I get into this kind of shit? Well, at least it's not paperwork for once.

Dammit, Blue, you better be okay.



"I am detecting traces of the Vault Dweller's footprints." The walking pile of junk ahead of them had a soft, soothing voice—and that was just fine with Cait, who had a hangover. Again.

"Just... Keep the clanking up there, would ya? Shite, I'm dyin' here." She took a swig of Nuka-Cola mixed with rye whiskey, just to take the edge off. The sun beat down on the radioactive wasteland around them, the Commonwealth's shimmering head baking her skin and making it hard for her to get drunk again. She was also hungry.

"Curie, love. Got any more of them canned sausages?"

“Why yes, *madame*. One moment.” Curie knelt and extracted some CRAM from her backpack, handing it to Cait. The hung-over warrior unrolled the tin seal and gobbled down the salty meat, belching softly.

“Mmm... That’s the good stuff.”

“Will you two keep up?” Piper waved at them from up ahead, where the teal-painted robot Ada was scouring their friend’s trail. “Jesus, Cait, are you eating *again*? We’re never going to find her if we keep stopping to fill your stomach!”

“You’re one to talk, tubby! Ow, shouldn’t have shouted...” She rubbed her forehead.

Curie cocked her head curiously. “I ‘ave noticed you keep referencing Ms. Piper’s weight. Is there a reason for this?”

Cait waved off the comment, burping softly as she staggered across uneven ground. “Yeah. It’s because she’s gone soft, sitting on her fat ass up in the Mayor’s office. She’s a pork chop, Curie. A lardo!”

“Hmm...” The former robot, now a curvaceous synth, struggled to decipher Cait’s slang. “So you are calling her overweight. But you are also overweight, yes?”

Cait growled under her breath. Grabbing Curie by the shoulder, she shoved her up against a tree. The two of them were inches apart, Curie’s wide eyes staring into hers. “Talk about my weight again, *tin can*, and Ah’ll shove me arm so far up your arse I’ll be able to use yer for a puppet.”

The petite girl blinked. “S-so I see you are sensitive about it! I shall not mention it again, I promise!”

“*Cait! Curie!* You better come see this!”

The two of them glanced at Piper, whose shout came from downhill. In the swamps south of Boston there was a pillar of smoke, and the new Mayor was heading right for it. Sighing, Cait took another swig of her “mixed drink” and grabbed Curie’s arm, pulling her along.

“Come on, pint-size. We gotta mystery to solve...”

“My goodness, you are—ow, you are very strong!”

When the two arrived at the end of the trail, Cait frowned. Not only was she sweaty, tired and gassy, the damn robot had led them to a place she’d already been—Suffolk County Charter School.

“Piper, what the hell is this? Nora an’ I already cleared this place out, a year ago.”

Piper was inspecting the source of the smoke, a hole blown in the wall. “Looks like Blue made her own doorway, here. You’re sure you cleared out the whole place?”

Cait nodded. “Yeah. Lots of weird shite in there—the ghouls weren’t half of it. Some kind of stuff was all over the walls...”

Piper plucked a small can from the ground. Its edges were smeared with a pinkish substance. “This kind of stuff?”

Cait nodded. The three of them and Ada stared into the dark gulf of the school, echoes from inside making it sound almost haunted. Outside, the dry bushes rattled in the wind.

“But zat makes no sense,” said Curie. “Why would she come all the way back ‘ere? If it was already looted...”

Piper handed her the can. “Something to do with this stuff, I bet. Cait, what exactly *did* you guys loot from here?”

The Irish woman grimaced, struggling to remember. “I dunno, honestly. I was pretty pissed at the time. There were a lot of holotapes... about some kind a’ food substitute? I remember Nora took a bunch of it... It was just lyin’ around everywhere.”

“Did she say anything about it?” Piper’s eyes were wide with concern. “Shit, I hope it wasn’t toxic...”

“Like I said, I was pissed. Like, *urrrp*, totally blotto.” Cait grinned. “That was a good raid though. I think we had a shag on top of some corpses.”

Piper bristled. She didn’t take kindly to hearing about Nora’s “adventures” with her exes, and Cait was no exception. “Goddammit, Cait. If you weren’t such a drunk *slut*, we might have something to go on here!”

The freckled woman held up a finger, swaying slightly. “Hey now, Ms. High and Mighty, don’t come after me because you couldn’t get a fuck if you opened your legs at Dunwich Borers—”

A soft slurping sound caused them both to pause in their bickering. Curie was dipping her fingers into the food substitute can, sucking the pink residue off her fingers. “I am detecting several unusual polypeptide chains,” she announced, her lips stained pink. “This chemical is highly artificial in nature.” She burped, covering her mouth with a blush. “Also, it tastes a lot like ze common child’s treat—bubblegum.”

Cait snorted with laughter. Piper panicked, snatching the can away. “Curie, don’t *eat* it! Holy shit, how did I get stuck with the two dumbest women in the Commonwealth?” Cait just rolled her eyes, but Curie seemed actually hurt, crossing her arms and turning away. “Hey, Curie. I’m sorry, I didn’t mean it.” Piper put a hand on her shoulder. “It’s just... real life, out here in the ‘Wealth, it’s dangerous. You can’t just go eating mysterious substances.”

“Yeah,” said Cait. “You gotta sterilize ‘em with liquor, first.”

“Excuse me,” said Ada, pointing one clawed hand towards the school. “But I am detecting signs of life inside. Should we go in?”

Piper bit her lip, trying to gauge the danger. Her instincts as a reporter and a leader told her to dive into the situation, but she knew it was risky—whatever was in there had somehow drawn Nora back after a whole year. And who knew what kind of horrible creatures had infested the place after Cait and the Vault dweller had finished their looting? “Okay. We’ll head inside. But Ada, I want you to watch this exit. If anyone other than us or Nora comes out, detain them. All right?”

“Affirmative,” said the robot, standing straight and entering standby mode. Piper liked Ada—unlike her *other* companions, the machine actually shut up once in a while.

“‘Detain’ them,” mumbled Cait mockingly. “Look at you, usin’ the big fancy words. Ms. Writer, esquire! Two whole syllables and shite...”

She waddled into the building. Curie and Piper followed her. Outside, in the shadows and incoming drizzle of rain, something terrible watched them disappear into the blackness.



Inside, the school was even more gloomy and depressing than it appeared from the exterior. Water dripped from ancient leaks in the ceiling, trash coated every corner and forgotten wreckage from the Old World lay scattered all over. Piper inspected the school’s central hall, curious.

“Dammit. If we’d brought Dogmeat with us, he could’ve sniffed Blue out in a heartbeat.”

“Yeah, well, ya didn’t think of that, did ya.” Cait wiped her nose and picked up a discarded pipe wrench. “So we gotta do it the hard way.” She banged the wrench on a rusted pipe, yelling.

“*Oy! Slag! Come out here and tell me why ya left me for an ink-spattered whore, ya welsher!*”

There was a long, awkward silence. Curie blushed and turned away, consumed with schadenfreude. Piper scowled and snatched the wrench away from Cait.

“Are you crazy? Old places like this are filled with ghouls. If you alert them...” She swallowed. “And thanks for calling me a ‘whore’ by the way. Very classy.”

Cait unscrewed her flask and took a hit. The stench of her, this close, made Piper’s eyes water. The girl was slick with sweat and reeked of body odor on top of the already dense smell of liquor. “Yeah? And what are you gonna do about it, Pipes? Write a bloody op-ed piece?”

“M-maybe I will!” She prodded Cait’s beer belly, which wobbled gelatinously. “About how the great cage fighter Cait the Fist got fat, stupid and hooked on booze—*ow!*”

Cait slapped her. The sound of it rang through the empty space and echoed across the rafters. The two of them faced off, Piper pulling a shiv from her red leather trenchcoat and Cait unclasping a spiked baseball bat from her waist. Then the whining, buzzing sound of a laser musket being primed came from nearby.

Curie stood with the weapon raised, cranked to maximum, the resonance chamber of the musket humming with energy. “Ladies, please! I do not know ‘ow to use zis, but if I ‘ave to, I will!” She shook her head. “You both should be *ashamed* of yourselves! All zis fighting when our good friend is in trouble! Put those silly things away. We are not men, to be measuring the size of our salamis at each other!”

The two remained in a standoff, for a moment. Then Piper giggled. “Salami? Is that even French?”

“I think it’s Norwegian,” slurred Cait. Then the two of them collapsed into snickering as Curie went red, lowering the musket.

“If zat is no good, I can select another innuendo...”

“It’s fine, lass.” Cait thumped her on the shoulder, looking uncharacteristically bashful. “I was lettin’ the whiskey get to me head again. Lucky thing we brought you, or I might have knocked off Inkbottom’s head before we got here.”

Piper sighed. “There’s no ink on my... Forget it, come on.” They moved deeper into the mausoleum of education, stepping over old bones and shredded textbooks.

Behind them, the unseen horror crawled through the shadows, watching their every move. Its mouth opened for the first time in millennia, as it hissed to itself.

“*New... sssstudents...*”



The trio found no sign of Nora, but they *did* find a large chamber full of old steel tables, a ruined kitchen standing at one end of the huge empty space. Cait bee-lined for the kitchen immediately, scrounging through it and gobbling down the Blamco mac-and-cheese she found there.

Piper turned up her nose at the sight. “You shouldn’t eat that, Cait. All that Old World junk’s going to do is make you fat.” She smirked. “Well... *Fat-ter*, anyway.”

“Yer one to talk, pork chop. Sittin’ up in that office has made you go all soft and wobbly.” Cait plopped her sizeable ass on a table, fat-rolls bunching and bulging out from under her corset. Her enormous muffin top wiggled as she pointed at Piper’s hips. “Ya look like you’ve had a few wee ones, m’dear. Except they were probably *food babies* and not real ones, eh?”

“Oh, shut up.” But Piper’s usually acid tongue went silent. She’d noticed something odd, standing against the wall nearby. “Hey, Curie. Come over here. What do you suppose these are?”

They’d discovered a bank of large, box-like food dispensers, their nozzles stained pink and crusted with some ancient substance. Around the dispensers they saw recent signs of a struggle: laser pistol burns, several spots of blood and what looked like the smeared remains of the same pink ooze. Curie, her programming driving her with scientific curiosity, reached out and twisted the crank of one of the dispensers.

Instantly a thick, pink paste splattered onto the countertop. It was viscous, thick and pudding-like, and smelled vaguely of bubble gum. Before Piper could stop her, Curie stuck her finger in it... and popped it into her mouth.

“Mmm. Very curious. Traces of corn syrup... Synthesized proteins...” Her eyes widened. “And nicotine. This is no ordinary food.”

“Curie, what the hell!” Piper pulled her hand out of her mouth. “Why would you eat mysterious tube goop?”

Curie shrugged. “It is for science, *non?*”

“Guys! Get your chubby arses over here.”

Cait’s yell drew them back to the center of the room. She was standing over the corpse of a Raider, whose body was smeared with the same pink substance. The girl’s war tattoos were obscured by splatters of the artificial food, and her body was bloated with flesh—pallid and pale in death. She was significantly overweight, and her stomach...

“Oh my God.” Piper staggered back. “Cait. Cait, her stomach *exploded*.”

“Aye. Poor girl had a bit too much to eat, if y’ask me.” Cait prodded the corpse with her bat. “And she let her figure go first, too. Hell of a way to die.”

Curie gagged. “I am going to... what is the phrase? ‘Hurl.’ Yes, I am going to hurl.” She staggered away into the kitchen.

Piper was disgusted by the sight... but also curious. “Looks like she died recently. Maybe a few days ago at most. The corpse isn’t just bloated with fat, it’s decomposing.”

“Look at this.” Cait was digging through the dead Raider’s belongings, and pulled out a thick, boxy bracelet of hard brown plastic. Its screen was broken but it was still active, images flickering across it.

“Is that...”

“Nora’s Pip-Boy.” Cait’s mocking, drunken façade had fallen away. “She’d never leave this behind, not without a fight. She’s got to be nearby somewhere.” The Irish woman blanched as she saw the pink ooze had ruptured from the woman’s middle, pooling on the cafeteria floor. “Fuck this. I need another drink.” And she pulled out her flask, and started chugging, chasing it down with a half-empty bottle of Vim.

Piper stepped away. She needed a moment to compose herself, to wrap her head around what was happening. *Nora came back here... after all this time... Why?* Something about the pink paste was bothering her. Cait said the stuff had come from here, and she and Nora had looted it. And the girl with the burst stomach... Something was drawing people to this place, something that then killed them. Could it be the pink stuff? If so, how? Nothing she’d ever seen was that addictive, not even Psycho or Jet. To draw someone as strong as Nora back from miles away, it would have to be...

She wandered into the kitchen to consult Curie—and found the synth girl drinking the same pink fluid from an old, dirty cup.

“What the *hell* are you doing?” She knocked the cup away and for the first time, Piper saw a flash of anger cross Curie’s face. She’d never seen that before. Curie was an innocent sweet-roll of a girl.

“Mademoiselle Piper,” said the synth, wiping pink ooze from her lips, “that was very rude of you.” She spoke slowly, almost hypnotically, and reached to pick up the cup. Piper kicked it away, horrified.

“What’s wrong with you?”

“The food,” Curie said. “It... calms me.” The way she dragged out the words made her sound drugged, or in a trance. She reached for the nozzle of a nearby food-dispenser. To Piper’s horror, the whole kitchen was full of the things.

“Stop that!” They struggled, and for a moment Piper thought Curie might overpower her. She was weak and flabby from her time in the Mayor’s chair, and she had little hand-to-hand skills, while Curie was a former Ms. Handy. But eventually she pinned the girl against the wall, her plump body mashing against the synth’s skinny one.

We’ve gotta get out of here. This stuff is turning us against each other.

“Piper,” whined Curie, “I just wanted a little bit more of zat food. Just a little bit, I promise. It... It makes me feel good. And I am so scared.”

“Scared is no excuse for stupid.” She marched Curie out into the cafeteria, where she found Cait pouring the same pink crap into her flask. “Oh god *dammit!* Cait, put that shit down!”

“Why?” Cait gulped from the flask, her lips now stained a bright pink as well. “Goes great with whiskey. And I’m out of chasers...”

“For fuck’s sake! Give me that!” She charged Cait, but the fat girl was much quicker, and shoved her away.

“Easy, love. Some of us need to eat, you know.” She blinked. “Or... drink. Or something. Fuck it.” And she began chugging from the flask, a grotesque mix of whiskey and pink fluid slopping down her chin and into her overstuffed cleavage. “*Gllk... glump... GLRRF.* Mmm, that’s good. **HUORRRP.**”

Piper saw the strings of her corset strain, several of them snapping. The stuff was actually making her fatter, before their very eyes. *What the hell is in that crap?!*

Meanwhile, Curie was advancing slowly back to one of the dispensers. “I think I would like a little more. Just a little. For... For science...”

“Dammit!” Piper pulled her pistol, but paused. What the hell was she going to do, shoot the two of them? She couldn’t get them out of here on her own.

Ada. I need to get Ada. She sprinted for the door... but when she turned the corner, she glimpsed a pink-skinned Ghoul in an old Vault jumpsuit. The ghoul had a two-by-four in its—her?—hand, and in the moments before the wood cracked over her head, Piper thought she recognized the suit.

That’s Nora’s jumpsuit.

Then the impact of the strike knocked her against the wall and she slumped to the floor, unconscious.



When she awoke, it was to a blast of cool air from a ceiling vent. She shivered, and realized her chest was exposed. In fact, most of her clothes were missing.

She was sitting in a schoolgirl’s desk—one meant for a child, by the size of it. Both her wrists were handcuffed to the edges of the desk, and her newsboy’s hat was gone. So was her jacket. Instead of

her usual clothes, she now had a too-small schoolgirl's uniform on, one that rode up her rather large ass and didn't entirely cover her paunch. "Shit. Shit, shit..." She yanked on the handcuffs.

Twin security turrets in the ceiling swiveled towards her, and she stopped struggling.

Turning to the left, she saw Curie and Cait in similar positions. They'd been stripped of their normal clothes and stuffed into children's uniforms, which were stretched thin over their adult bodies. Cait's in particular looked ready to explode, since the out-of-shape fighter's body was now more fat than muscle... and getting bigger. Bright-pink stretchmarks covered her gut, which oozed over the top of the desk, and her rear bulged in sagging clumps of fat out of the sides.

All three of them were positioned facing a blackboard with a single word on it, written in chalk.

EAT.

Piper shivered. A drop of something pink and clumpy fell on her arm, and she turned to find a Mrs. Handy hovering there, its jet propulsion engine crackling.

"Why hello, little lady," it said, in a chipper British nanny's accent. "Looks like it's time for your lunch." It extended one matriculated arm and shoved a nozzle in Piper's mouth. The nozzle was attached to a flamethrower tank, and Piper's eyes widened in terror—until the cold, pink good she'd seen upstairs sprayed into the back of her throat. Then suddenly she felt calm, almost... happy. Placated. In fact, the moment the stuff touched her tongue she *immediately* wanted more.

No. No, it's just the junk in the paste, making me want that. I'm not hungry, I'm not—But she swallowed anyway. Swallowed greedily, and found her mouth opening, ready for more. Her stomach gurgled as the strange material expanded inside her, like a foam.

"No no, my dear, you've had your fill. Remember, greedy girls get the paddle!" The Mrs. Handy brandished a spanking attachment, on one of its arms. "Your friend Cait has already needed to be punished several times. Such a greedy little lady!"

"You bet your arse," slurred Cait. She was grinning, her eyes half-lidded, and Piper saw her entire lower face was splattered with pink ooze.

"Madame," said Curie, trying to raise one cuffed hand, "may I 'ave some more?"

"Of course, dear." The robot crossed to Curie and Piper watched in disgust as the pixie-haired girl sucked from the nozzle, her eyes rolling back with pleasure. Her stomach strained against the desk and Piper swore she saw Curie's ass get fatter, widening in the seat until it nearly hung over the sides.

"Teacher's pet," slurred Cait, belching. "Teacher's little slut."

"Uh... Guys?" Piper felt her mind drifting, but she hadn't become the best reporter in Diamond City by being a sucker, and she shook it off. "Guys, we need to get out of here. This isn't right."

But wasn't it? She was already questioning her own words as she spoke them. The pink stuff tasted *so good*, like bubblegum crossed with sunbeams and she wanted *more*, she wanted so much more. She thought if she had access to an unlimited supply right now, she wouldn't be able to control herself. She'd eat and eat until her stomach burst, like that poor woman upstairs...

"Shove it up yer arse, nerd." Cait slapped her stomach. "Teacher! Get over her, I'm fuckin' hungry, ya ken?"

The Mrs. Nanny hovered behind Cait. “Such language! You need the paddle again, I see.” The machine swatted her rear, and Cait squirmed, clearly enjoying it.

“Is that all you got, you bucket a’ bolts? Hit me harder!”

THWACK.

“Weak! Harder!”

WHACK! THWAP!

The spanking continued until the flabby, sagging meat of Cait’s ass was red and shining. The masochistic woman was panting heavily, breasts sagging nearly out of her tiny uniform. She winked at Piper.

“Best... School... Ever... URRRP.”

“You’re disgusting.” Piper tried to focus on slipping out of the cuffs, but they seemed tighter than they had a moment ago. Were her wrists... thicker? No, that was impossible. But it sure felt that way. And her bust seemed to bulge out further than it normally did. Piper was a bit vain in private, and measured her breasts every day, the better to look fetching to Nora when her lover came home from questing. She was definitely bigger... and now her stomach rolls were touching the edge of the desk.

It’s that stuff. It’s turning us into pigs. Oh my God, we’re going to die in here.

But where was ‘here’? The classroom was featureless, white steel and desks... but it was also clean. Too clean to be anyplace in the Commonwealth. Piper looked closer, and saw tiny Vault-Tec logos on each of the light fixtures.

We’re in a Vault? Shit, shit...

Clearly she couldn’t depend on her friends to help her out of here. Curie’s glazed-over, eager expression and Cait’s lewd, lip-biting lust were both a *very* bad sign. Each of these women were experienced fighters and wasteland dwellers, and they’d been rendered helpless by whatever this pink stuff was. Piper needed to get out of here on her own.

Think, dammit. Most Ms. Nannies aren’t like Curie—they can’t go outside the limits of their programming. There must be a way to dodge this “educational” nonsense...

“Uh, teacher?” she asked, edging away as a dangling nozzle splattered pink goo on her desk. “I need to go to the bathroom.”

The Mrs. Nanny turned towards her, paddle extended, and Piper flinched as she expected a retributive slap. But instead, the the robot drifted towards her, extending a nozzle.

“Of course, dear. But you must finish your snack first...”

Crap! What choice did she have? If she was going to get out of this room, she needed to take the plunge. Wrapping her lips gingerly around the robot’s shiny silver dispenser, she blinked in surprise as the pink food substitute gushed into her mouth. Foamy, sugary and sticky, it covered her tongue and slid down her throat, and... and...

It's so... good. Piper's sharp intellect softened and dulled as the chemicals inside the goo activated, her body going tingly all over and her ample belly ballooning. *It tastes... great. Wow, I'm so happy all of a sudden. When was the last time I felt this happy?*

Not in years, she thought. Not since that day when she caught the corruption in her old village. But happiness was a slippery slope—bliss was deadly, in the Wasteland. Nora had made her feel that bliss. *Oh, Blue. Why'd you have to run off on me like that?*

The loss of her beau reminded her where she was, what was happening. Piper's lips popped off the nozzle, shaking her head. "Th... thank you, Teacher. I will... I will be right back."

There was a pop as the manacles on the desk unlocked remotely. The Ms. Nanny buzzed back to Curie, who was doing her best to raise her hand.

"*Madame, may I have some—HIC!—some more?*"

They're completely hooked on that stuff. Piper stood slowly, her ankles slipping out of the lower manacles. *I've got to stay focused, or else I'll end up just as... hungry... I'm hungry... Want food...*

She pinched herself, then hurried out into the hallway. She had no intention of using the bathroom. "Okay, here we go. Operation escape maneuver. You can't keep a good reporter down!" She belched softly as she walked—no, waddled down the featureless corridors of white metal. "Wow, gonna need a diet when I get outta here..." Her belly flopped and wobbled over her waistband, heavier and saggier than ever, and now loaded with addicting pink junk.

The idea of trying to puke it up came to her, but just as suddenly came the need for MORE. To her horror, she saw the walls ahead were periodically studded with water fountains, bubblers like you'd see in an Old World elementary school... except they were all fitted with the same nozzle as the Ms. Handy.

All of those things dispense the pink stuff. Her brain lit up with desire. *No, no no... I don't wait it... I...*

The next thing she knew, she was rising from an animal's crouch, her lips unwrapping from one of the nozzles. Her belly dangled obscenely, nearly at the middle of her thighs. It was enormously heavy, and she grunted as she turned herself like a battleship, struggling to continue her escape.

"Okay... URRRrrp, it was just a snack... We just stopped for a little BWRURP, snack. No p-problem." Her footfalls landed heavier, her joints straining from the sudden addition of new flesh to her frame. Her fingerless gloves were overstuffed by the meat of her chubby hands, and the idiotic schoolgirl's uniform she was in was slowly shredding apart under her weight. Red-faced and wheezing, Piper reached the end of the hall and beheld a nightmare she'd never anticipated before.

"S-stairs... No!"

She'd packed on at least a dozen pounds in the last few minutes, and she wasn't a small girl to begin with. Gripping the smooth Vault-Tec handrail on the wall, she began hauling herself laboriously up, grunting and grumbling as her thighs chafed and her loaded stomach slapped against her thighs.

"Going... on a diet... BHURRPF, the second I get out. Promise."

Halfway up, in a bend in the staircase, she found another dispenser.

The Piper who exited the staircase was not the same one who'd started the climb. Coated with sweat, jowl-faced and swollen, her lips dripped with pink food substitute and her enormous gut dangled like a pendulous fruit, grazing her bare knees. She staggered into the hall, leaning on a Vault-Boy poster. Her knees ached from the sudden load of more weight, and she was fighting a furious need to fart.

“Gah... Huff. Oof. Just another little... *brearrp*, snack. No... problem... HUFF.”

Waddling down the hall she was accosted by a pair of Ms. Nannys, who buzzed around her, prodding her massive form.

“My, my... Someone's coming along well!”

“She's almost ready for the next lesson soon...”

“What a good little piggy!”

Piper waved them away, her voice slurred as she struggled to think through a cloud of drugs. “I'm not... not a pig...” She burped. “Well... at least, I'm not as much a pig as Cait... and that's what *hurrrp* matters...” She jiggled along, the Ms. Nannies following her and prodding at her plump rear.

“Would piggy care for another snack?”

“Good heavens, look at the size of her rear! What a naughty, greedy girl...”

Piper grunted as a burst of flatulence escaped her. Clearly the pink stuff didn't agree with her insides... But she was already salivating for more. “Who the hell... huff, programmed you guys? Some kind of BDSM raider?”

Then she caught sight of a doorway. Over the door was the label SPECIMEN ROOM, and something soft and blue had been draped over the windows. Curtains, maybe.

There was an airlock around the door. Maybe if she could get inside, she could get control of this facility... set Cait and Curie free. Or maybe there would be more food inside. Either way, Piper had to fight not to just give up right here. She felt so hungry, and so sleepy...

But love kept her going, somehow. “Gotta find Blue. Gotta—URRP, help her.” She shoved her newly enormous body into the airlock, her side rolls scraping the glass and her freshly expanded hips brushing the borders of the chamber.

“*Decontamination beginning.*”

Piper saw the trap just before it struck. The little decontamination sprayers overhead were identical to the dispensers outside, wired up to pink tanks. She sighed, and shrugged as the liquid began to foam up the tubes... ready to hose her down.

“Well, I tried.”

Minutes later, the other side of the airlock opened. A waterfall of fat emerged where previously a heavily overweight Piper had stood. Eventually, chunky hands with bingo-wing arms pushed through the fat, and Piper's head popped out of the condensed sea of blubber.

“Damn, that was... News-worthy. **BR'HARRRPfff.**”

She was coated in pink slime, splattered with it, the spray oozing down into her colossal breasts and collecting between her chins. Scraping up chunks of it with her fingers, she clumsily shoved it into her mouth.

“Mmf! More. More, more!”

But there was no more. The sprayers had stopped. Her mind numb and dull from the intoxicating ooze, Piper fell sideways out of the airlock, the wedging of her fat-rolls loosened by the slippery pink slime. She crashed to the floor, her uniform shredded, the only remaining scraps of her outfit now the battered newsboy’s cap she always wore and the fingerless gloves, which were nearly reduced to tatters.

“Huff. . . hrrf. . . A little help here? **BLURRP.**” She wriggled and struggled, but she’d been so efficiently force-fed the stuff that she couldn’t get up. Inside a few minutes Piper had put on several hundred pounds. Unnatural, pink stretch marks covered her entire body, and her flabby face was flushed with exertion.

“Don’t... *ffffight it... Piper.*” A deep, rumbling voice gurgled from overhead. The chamber beyond the airlock was dark, but she saw the edges of some enormous structure. A tent, maybe? The blue fabric of it was heaving with movement.

“Who’s... that?” The reporter blinked. Her brain sluggish and stupefied, it took her a minute to recognize the voice. “Nora? Hic-URRP. Is that you?”

“Not exactly...” A thin form emerged from the corner, carrying a hose. It was a Ghoul woman, wearing a Vault suit, with a short crop of dark hair. Her eyes glittered with mad malevolence.

Even loaded with mind-altering slop, Piper was still the inquisitive type. “Who’re you? Did you.. BRELCH, make this place? Let us out of here!”

The Ghoul snickered. “Look at you. Nora’s favorite fuck-toy, stretched out on the floor like a soggy parade float. I pity you.” She twisted a dial on the hose, and Piper licked her lips as she saw pink food substitute dribbling out of it.

“Want... food...”

“I know you do, piggy.” She dangled the hose over Piper’s helpless blubbery mass, and cackled as her atrophied, swollen limbs reached for it. “You Wastelanders are just as greedy as you are gullible. My name’s Shelly Tiller—your friend *Nora* took a contract on my life, back when she was fresh out of her Vault. Apparently she needed the caps.” The Ghoul smiled humorlessly. “But she shouldn’t have used a gamma gun. You never know what kind of odd things may happen, when you shoot enough radiation into a person.”

Piper’s normally sharp mind was essentially mush at this point, but she still struggled to “interview” the creature, squinting as the mental effort chewed up most of her remaining energy. “She turned you... into a Ghoul. And this is your... revenge? To make us **EURRP**, fat?”

“Not just fat. Stupid, obedient, and trapped in your own gluttonous shapes.” She dribbled the pink goo on Piper’s chin, and against her will the reporter lapped it up like a thirsty dog, panting and whimpering. “You deserve this for supporting that monster, Nora. And this Vault is perfect for keeping monsters like you alive, and maintained... Toys for me to play with.” She prodded one bloated Piper-teat, the nipple wobbling on its bed of flab. “It gets lonely down here, you know.”

“The Vault... HURRRPpp.” Piper was fast losing the last of her reasoning, her eyes crossing with the desire to lick one drop of pink stuff off the end of her nose. “Why would they... do this? What was it for?”

Shelly Tiller shrugged.... And stuck the hose in Piper’s mouth. “Why build a secret force-feeding Vault under a Charter school, before the war, and funnel the experimental food up to the school above? Why turn the whole staff and student body into fat idiots, and bring them underground for testing? No idea.” She twisted the dial on the nozzle. “The Old World people must have been crazy. But at least it means you, and me and Nora... and those two greedy idiots you brought here... we can have fun for a long, long time.”

Piper gagged as a concentrated flow of pink food-goo, much more and at a higher speed than she’d ever had it, poured down her throat. The hydraulic pressure was so high that it began leaking out her nose, and her eyes rolled back as her newly elastic stomach sloshed... and gurgled... and grew. Raising her off the floor, her cheeks growing pink and elastic to match her gut, the former reporter swelled into an unrecognizable state.

Shelly smirked, and flicked on the lights. Floodlights burst into brilliance, illuminating the stadium-sized room. In the middle of it, looming over both of them, was Nora.

Dozens of pipes led from the food-substitute processing tanks directly into her mouth. Her face was so buried in flesh that only her lumpy forehead, nose and eyes were visible around the folds of flesh; everything else was buried in multiple jowls, bunched chins or simply folds from the rest of her body that had compressed up towards her face under their own weight. Her simple bob-cut was smeared with grease and pink fluid, her eyes placid and mindless, half-lidded and staring ahead. She seemed to have some flicker of recognition at the sight of Piper laying there, but it quickly passed. She mumbled around the pipes jammed into her throat, gurgling a gleeful greeting.

“Eat up... Piper, it’s...” Her body shook with a colossal earthquake of flatulence from the hills of her rear end. Her body was covered in dozens of Vault suits, patched together to form a primitive bra and to cover the overflowing bloating of her crotch. “It’s good for you. **HURRRRkk-urrrrp.**”

As she heard Curie and Cait being dragged in behind her, and watched Shelly pull two fresh hoses from the churning tanks of pink ooze, Piper’s last flicker of resistance was buried beneath a flood of greed. In the corner, an old radio crooned out a Louis Prima song. Apparently Cait had been wrong: Travis “Lonely” Miles did try new songs, once in a while. Although this one couldn’t have come at a worse time.

“I’ve got a woman as big as a house, yes sir!”

Piper felt the ooze filling up her body, clogging her entire digestive system. New folds and rolls seemed to grow whole-cloth from her already massive body. Pinned to the floor, all she could do was swallow, and swallow...

“She’s as big as a two-story house with a porch and a fence!”

Curie giggled as Shelly approached her, teasing her with the hose nozzle before shoving it in her mouth. An experienced gourmand, the French girl guzzled like a greedy mosquito, her pear-shaped frame filling out, spilling across the floor...

“The bigger the figure, the better I like her... The better I like her, the better I feed her... The better I feed her, the bigger the figure—”

As Louis reached his crescendo, the sound of stretching skin and sloshing liquid filled the room. Cait didn't even wait for Shelly to reach her, grasping over her own freckled fat to snag a stray hose. She deep-throated it like she was the best alley whore in Boston, which... wasn't far from the truth. Her blue eyes brimmed with painful tears as she filled her entire throat with hose, but from the sight of her other hand grabbing for the warm spot under her swollen pannis, Cait was the furthest thing from unhappy right now. "Mmmf... Fook yes... URRRAP!"

"The bigger the figure, the more I'm in LOVE!"

Over it all, Nora watched the trio, her own arousal spiking as a new mixture of the pink slop gushed into her. She was a monster of fat, an obese blob of post-apocalyptic blubber, and now her friends had joined her. Once upon a time that would have bothered her. But now?

The more, the merrier.