

Serenity - June 4, 2010

Several years had passed since Kit had felt free. Three years ago she had been arrested and thrown into boarding school. "Its for your own good", they said. "We will teach you proper respect, and someday you will leave here a Lady!" Right, like that was ever going to happen. The very fact that they would even suggest a thing just goes to show how much they really didn't know her. Of course they would come looking for her, maybe even send out the authorities, but she was sure that she had caused them enough trouble over the last three years. They were probably glad to be rid of her....she hoped.

It had taken some serious planning, and a great deal of luck, but Kit now found herself Captain of her very own Firefly class vessel. At first she had considered trying to fly the ship all on her own. Kit liked being alone...no one telling her what to do, where to go, how to dress, or what to eat. That's why she liked the blackness of space. Out here she could be anything or anyone, and no one could tell her differently. She smiled to herself as she played out the fantasy in her mind. All by herself in the blackness of space. After a few moments of blissful daydreaming reality kicked in, and Kit knew she needed a crew who could help her out here in the black. As much as she hated to admit it she couldn't survive out here on her own. She needed help. With that in mind she punched in the coordinates into the nav computer, and hoped she was heading in the right direction. Six had been a hard man to find.

Six and Kit had flown together before. Three years ago on another Firefly class ship under the command of Adam Jaymes. It had not been a pleasant experience, and for a brief moment Kit had been happy when the authorities had dragged her away. But Six had been pleasant enough, and if you wanted someone on your side in a fight Six was it! There was a quality about him that many took for stupidly rugged, but Kit knew that there was a certain sense of brilliance behind his eyes. Six never really said much, but when he did people would listen. Kit found him in a bar on the outskirts', and he was more the willing to join up with Kit.

"What happened to our old crew?" Kit asked "Well, the Captain just disappeared. We had a hole in the side of the ship, and the Captain went out to fix it, and that was it. Nothing!" Six looked sullen. The Captain and Six had been good friends. "I figure he's dead, but maybe I am wrong. Stranger things have happened." "As for the rest of the crew the only one I know for sure of is Luxa. She works a luxury liner that travels a route about three days from here. I drop here a line from time to time." Staring off into the distance Six continued "She always seems surprised to hear from me." Kit, not hiding the smile on her face says "She probably is surprised your still alive." "No, that cant be it, I'm too cute to die!"

Kit wasn't smiling anymore. The conversation had taken a turn that she was not comfortable with. "So any other ideas on who we can find to help us run the ship?" Six looked at his beer deep in thought. "Well..." he said slowly "If I know the kind of

business we are likely to be getting into we might want to look up Xander Axiom.” Six tips his glass back swallowing the rest of his beer and letting out a exasperated sigh. The expression not being lost on Kit “You don’t sound to enthusiastic about this Axiom fellow.” Six straightened “No you misunderstand, Xander is one of the best in his line of work. He specializes in “Acquisitions”, but he is just a little flamboyant.” “He thinks the world is a stage and he is the lead character. But if we going to going about “acquiring” things we want him on our side.”

Several days later Kit, Six, and the newly “acquired” Xander Axiom are a few short hours away from the planet Athens. Athens was one of the hardest hit planets during the war between the Brown Coats and the Alliance. With both Six and Mr. Axiom being veterans of that war and proud wearing Brown Coats the return is a bitter memory.

As they near the planet Kit sends a wave down to the ground crew. After a short explanation of their visit; which was totally made up on the spot, Kit is given permission to land. Once on the surface Six sends a wave to Luxa who is up in orbit around the planet on a luxury cruise ship bringing people back to their home world. Luxa receives the message that she has a wave waiting for her, and takes it in her quarters. As she turns on the view screen she see’s Six’s large grinning face staring back at her. “Oh My God!!!” She exclaims “Luxa, how are you?” “Six, its so nice to see you.” Luxa says with a very cautious tone. She continues, “What are you doing here?” “Well, it’s a funny story, but we want you to come work for us.” “Us?” Luxa asks. About this time Kit, who has grown impatient with the long drawn out conversation sticks her head into the view screen. “Oh My God!!!!” Luxa screams. The last time Luxa saw Kit she was three years younger, stole everything in site, and was being hauled off by the authorities. “Hi, Luxa. Listen I have my own ship now, we are looking for crewmembers, and your name came up. Are you in or out?” Luxa very concerned by this turn of events say in a VERY cautious tone of voice “Kit, its so good to see you. I appreciate your offer, but I really need to think about it. I mean I have a really good job here, and I am not sure I want to give it all up to go traipsing around the verse with you and Six.” Six, sticking his head in the view frame says “If its your ship that’s the problem I can always blow it up!” “NO, that wont be nessesarry!” Luxa responds “Are you sure its really now problem. I have some spare explosives onboard and just this morning I was trying to figure out what to do with them. I don’t want to just have them sitting in my cabin to go bad, and....” “Six” Kit interrupts “We are NOT going to blow up the ship.” Luxa breaths a sigh of relief never thinking she would be grateful to Kit for ANYTHING! “Listen” Luxa begins “Im not saying no, but this is a big decision. Can we been at The Dead Goat Café to discuss it in a couple hours? They all agree and the meeting is set.

The planet of Athens is in chaos! The war hit the planet hard, and didn’t leave much afterwards. The planet, only recently having been reopened, is being flooded with previous occupants hoping to find their homes and possessions in tact. What they find is a long forgotten battle field. Buildings are crumbling, streets are in shambles, every home and business in sight has been picked clean by scavengers. What was

once a beautiful city is now nothing more than a rat infested breeding ground. A few places didn't take all that much damage. The Dead Goat being one of them. The Café is one of those small open aired restaurants. Why it's called a café is beyond anyone comprehension. It resembles more of something you would see on the outside of a Mexican lunch van. With a few tables spread out over the open ground, and some really horrible music coming from inside the kitchen area of the restaurant one would wonder why anyone would want to eat here. But there sitting in the middle were four people. "I just think it would be better for Luxa if there wasn't something drawing her away!" Six said under his breath "Six, the answer is no! You cant blow up the ship! Sooner or later it will lead back to us, and even if it doesn't it will sure put all the authorities on high alert, and make our job of getting off this rock even harder!" Kit who had been having this argument with Six for over an hour hoped her last statement would shut Six up. She knew how much he hated the alliance, and he would often go to great extremes to avoid any contact with them whatsoever.

After a few minutes Luxa arrives with a handsome Spaniard in tow. After a few words with her friend he walks over to the bar, and Luxa joins the table. "OK so after some thought I have decided that living on a luxury liner serving the same meals to the same kind of people, going to the same kind of places is NOT for me. However before I join your crew Kit I have one condition." Kit looking slightly amused that anyone would give her a condition to join her crew leans forward to listen more carefully. "I am looking for someone. I have been looking for this someone for a very long time. My condition is should I find out any information on the whereabouts of this person we have to drop what we are doing and look into the information." Luxa finishes her condition with almost a pleading tone to her voice. The expression is not lost on Kit. "Luxa, I am willing to help you find who ever it is you are looking for, but I cant just drop everything and go looking into information that may or may not turn out to be viable. I could however be willing to look into it as soon as it's safe for both the crew, and the ship, also providing we are between jobs, or its on the way." Luxa realizes this is as good an offer as she is going to get and agrees.

It at that time that Manuel walks up to the table holding two drinks in his hand. With a deep and rich Spanish accent he introduces himself as Manuel, and offers to buy a round of drinks for the whole table. After some discussion Kit finds out he is a doctor on the luxury cruise ship and offers him a job. He accepts, but slightly reluctantly as he recognizes Six.

Six is recognized as one of the Dust Devil Killers who slaughtered an entire family one night for nothing more than a few credits and a warm meal. Problem with the whole thing is Six wasn't there.

Jain, a quiet wondering monk is wondering the streets of Athens lending assistance wherever he is found in need. Years ago he gave up a great deal to live a life a service, and so far has never looked back. He has become a great help to the people of Athens, and has made it a point to know everyone in the area. As he walks down

the crowded streets he notices a small group of people drinking at The Dead Goat. Having never seen them before he decides to walk up and introduce himself. As he approaches the table he stops and listens. The conversation dies down so suddenly that Jain wasn't able to pick out a single sentence of their conversation. Suddenly he finds himself being stared at by five strangers. "Hello, my name is Jain. How are you all today?" The five strangers continue to stare. Well what would you do if some random monk came up to your table and just introduced himself? After a few moments Xander breaks the silence. "Good to meet you my dear lad, we are very well, very well indeed. How may we be of service to you this fine day?" Jain, not used to such theatrical greetings looks at Xander and says "I am here to serve and I make it my point to know everyone in this area. I had not seen any of you before and thought I would come and offer you any assistance you might be in need of." Kit, very much wondering if such a person can be trusted asks "Well, to be honest we just came to the area to pick up a couple friends. We wont be staying long. Besides it really doesn't look like there is much left here anyways." Jain looks around and nods his head, and with an almost absent minded tone says "Yes, the main city has been picked clean. It not until you start hitting the outlying outposts that you find areas that haven't been looted." This of course perks Kits ears, and hoping she isn't pushing her luck pries just a little bit more. "What do you mean by outposts? Alliance outposts?" "Yes, in fact there is a fairly large one about 2 miles north of here. As I understand it, it served as one of the main command posts during the war." Everyone at the table look at each other with somewhat repressed excited faces. "Six, Xander" Kit forming the start of a plan in her head "What kind of valuables could we expect to find inside an alliance outpost?" Xander stands tall and looks as if he were about to give a groundbreaking performance "The documents inside could be considered invaluable! With the information they may contain we could live very comfortably for a very long, long time! I suggest we search this outpost as soon as possible, and not let this opportunity pass us by." "I agree with Xander, just not as flamboyant like." Six says Kit is thrilled. She came to this planet just looking to pick up a good crewmember. Now her crew is almost full, she has a doctor of all the luck, and it just might turn out there is money to be made on this planet. "I suggest we pay up, and head back to the ship and supply up." Kit says.

Around 20 minutes later Kit along with the rest of the crew finds themselves in the cargo hold of the ship. Kit and Six start handing out supplies including a few weapons, when suddenly Kit looks up and see the Monk. In her excitement she had completely forgotten he was there. In the haste to get out of The Dead Goat she didn't seem to notice Jain tagging along. "What are you doing here?" Kit says alarmed "I thought you would be needing a guide to show you where the outpost for the alliance is." Jain responds "Besides I have a very good way of being able to judge a good adventure, and I am very sure that you and these people will be able to provide me with a very good adventure and story." Kit sighs and thinks to herself for the briefest of moments. She now has a crew, but how many of them really know what they are getting themselves into? "I think before we go any further down this rabbit hole I should make a few things clear to everyone." As kit continues the crew gathers around her listening. "When I acquired this ship I had every intention of

finding work, and exploring the black. You fly with me you fly my way, and I want to make it clear my way is generally on the wrong side of the law. If that doesn't bother any of you then you are welcome to stay, if it doesn't sound like your cup of tea, then I suggest you step off." Kit looks around, she can't lie to herself she really wouldn't be unhappy if some of them were to leave. People complicate things, and Kit doesn't like complicated. Not for the last time Kit wishes that she could just fly the ship and explore the black on her own.

Looking around she sees that everyone is still there. Kit couldn't have made it any more clear about what her intentions were. She stands tall, looks at Six and says "Six, looks like we have ourselves a ship, a crew, and our first job. Let's get everyone geared up, and headed out." Six nods, with a big smile on his face, and continues to pass out equipment, weapons, and gear. Fifteen minutes later the crew was traveling towards their first job. The abandoned outpost of the Alliance.

The outpost is a tall three story building made out of thick cinder blocks. Almost all of the windows on the first and second floor are broken and shattered. Those on the first floor are in tact, but are caked in dark brown grime. The windows may be intact but no one would be able to see through them. The vegetation and plants of the area have become overgrown, and tangled around the building. Dark green vines make their way up and across the building. Despite Jain's assurances that this building would be unscathed by looters in the area Kit notices a heavy amount of graffiti on the outside of the building. She starts to doubt if they will find anything of value inside.

As they approach the building they find the front door closed. Opening the door they find the remains of what was once the front office of the outpost. A cheap partial board desk lies overturned on the floor, the remnants of where a secretary probably sat and answered phones for the alliance. Searching the first floor turns up very little. A half dozen offices with cheap furniture, broken pictures, and other paraphernalia strewn about the floor. Kit is becoming more and more convinced that her first job may turn out to be a total bust.

Moving to the second floor they find some more promising finds. After a few minutes of searching Six comes running out of the bathroom excited to show the group he has found toilet paper. The entire group is excited by the find, and not only is it toilet paper, its soft triple layered paper. Kit sighs thinking still that this whole trip was a waste of everyone's time, but at least they will have clean butts for the next week or so. Kit walks into the kitchen, and finds a very disheveled, and dirty kitchen. Hoping to maybe at least find some food they can bring back to the ship Kit starts to look through the cupboards and closets. As she tries to open what looks to be a broom closet she is surprised to find it locked. She does her best to unlock it, but finds that, for a broom closet, its very well locked. Kit leaves the closet and finds Xander. "Mr. Axiom, its time for you to earn your keep on my ship. I found a closet in the kitchen that I can't unlock. Given this is the sort of thing you are suppose to be good at I thought you could open it." Xander, standing to his full height, while a

huge smile spreads across his lips says "Madam, it would be my great delight, and extreme pleasure!" As Xander skips off to the kitchen Kit follows. Xander inspects the lock, and after a moment of consideration pulls a small black tool from inside his jacket. He inserts the tool inside the locks opening, and begins to slowly turn it from the right to the left. After a second or two there is a small click and the lock releases its hold, as Xander opens the door. Kit steps forward, not wanting Xander to have the first look inside. Inside is dark, and Kit has trouble making out what's inside. As her eyes adjust to the low amount of light Kit begins to see the treasure they just discovered. "Xander, go get Six....Quick!" Xander looking confused run off, and a few minutes later comes back with Six. By now Kit is starting to pull things out of the closet, and the two men start to assist and help her. After almost 10 minutes the three of them stand looking at their new find. All in all it comes down to 10 body armor vests, 4 rifles, 4 pistols, 4 boxes of candy (minus one because Six swiped one when he saw them), 1 box of stun grenades, and 24 more rolls of toilet paper. Not the horde of valuables Kit was hoping for, but she is pleased that the trip didn't turn out to be a complete bust.

With the third floor left to go the team moves upstairs and begins the search. With each member of the team in different areas of the floor Xander moves into an old office. As he looks around the mess he finds a file cabinet covered in a layer of dust. Trying to open it he finds that its locked. Cracking his fingers he sets to work on the lock, and finds that it is a most formidable opponent. It takes him nearly 5 minutes to get it open. Once the cabinet is open he starts looking through the files. After about 10 minutes he has files laid out across the still upright desk. There are files on troop movements during the war, officer personnel files, and convoy/blockade information. While all of this information is out of date its still worth a fortune in the right hands. One file in particular catches his eye. The file is labeled "Open Investigation, Pending" Xander opens it, inside he finds information about a convoy that, during the war, and while enroute, experienced some unusual trouble. Many of its passangers started getting sick for no apparent reason. The sickness was so bad that aid was called for, and when the Alliance showed up only a few "survivors" were rescued, while the rest of the passengers, and their ships were left in the blackness of space. The coordinates are listed for the last know location of the ships, and it gives no indication that they were ever recovered.

As Xander continues to read the file Six pokes his head inside. "Hey you find anything?" Xander looks up with a solom expression on his face "I think I did my good man, I think I did. Come and take a look at some of these files." Six comes over and starts browsing through the files. "These will bring us some serious money, IF we can get in contact with the right people." "Yes they will, but to be honest I am more interested in this file." Xander shows him the file on the sick convoy. Sixs eyes light up. "A convoy that size would be loaded with supplies and valuables." Xander nods his head. "We should show these to the captain once we get back to the ship." Six says Xander agrees and the two of them pick up the files and they are placed in sixs bag. "Come on lets get out of here." Six says

As the two of them walk out into the hallway the sound of gunfire explodes through the silence and Six barley misses taking a bullet in the head. Six and Xander dive for cover, and start to draw weapons. The rest of the group hear the gunfire and rush towards the sound also drawing their own weapons. Six, who has taken cover with Xander behind an overturned desk peaks his head around to get a look at who is firing. He sees three men with guns raised standing out in the open like idiots waiting to die. He takes a good hard look and then sit back. Xander looks at him "Well my good lad, how does our first action sequence look to be turning out?" "Lousy, considering that one of the three goons out there is Todd!" "Todd? As in our old compatriate and fellow in arms Todd?" "Yeah, that Todd. Not sure what hes..." Six was cut off by a round of shots being fired at them, and both Xander and Six cover their heads and parts of the desk fly off in every direction. "FOR THE LOVE OF ALL THAT'S GOOD AND HOLY! TODD QUIT SHOOTING AT US!!!" Six yells. There is a moment of cease fire. Six continues "Listen up to pea brain your shooting at us, and I would like you to stop! Its Xander and Six!" "Six is that you?" one of the men replies. "Yes! Now put your guns down so we can come out and talk!" Both Xander and Six here the sound of a gun being holstered. "Well come on out here you silly dog!" Six looking at Xander silently counts to three with his fingers. On three both Xander and Six stand up pointing their weapons at the three men. Only one of the men have lowered their weapons, while the other two stay still with pistols raised. "Six, why it is you! You silly old raccoon, come here an give me a hug." "I would be happy to do that but your goons are still pointing guns in my direction." Todd looks back at his two companions and says "Put your guns down you idiots, its Six! Hes a friend of mine!" Todd looks up and takes a long look at Xander "Xander is that you too? Why I never thought I would be seeing you again." Xander looking amuzed bows slightly "A good actor always has a surprise for his audience." "Boy you sure haven't changed have you Xander." He laughs "What are you two doing here?!" Six looks around and sees Kit for the first time looking confused and a little angry. "Captain you can come out, this is Todd. He err a sort of friend of ours. Fought for the Browncoats back in the war." Six along with the rest of the crew emerge from their various cover spots. "Nice to meet you, I think." Kit says. Six turns to Todd "You want to explain to me what the hell you were taking shot at us for, and what the hell your doing here?" "Well" Todd begins "Back during the war I had a girlfriend who was working these offices. Course none of the Alliance knew she was one of us, and that certainly worked to our advantage. A few years ago she told me about a file that I might find useful. She says the file contained the location of an abandoned convoy the Alliance deserted back during the war. Its suppose to be filled with goods, and maybe even money. So as soon as this planet opened up me along with Ace and King here came looking for it. When you and Xander popped out of that office there it took us by surprise. No hard feelings about the shooting I hope." Six looks at Kit "Hes telling the truth as far as I can tell Captain. Xander and I did find several files in there, and one of them does tell of an abandoned convoy. We took all the files and were going to show them to you once we got back to the ship." Todd takes a step forward "Six I don't know what you financial situation here is, but me and the boys here came ready to head out to that convoy. We have the money and the resources to do so. How bout we team up. Your crew with my crew here,

and we go scout and pillage that ship together. It will be just like old times, besides the more hands we have on this job the faster the work will go." Kit steps in front of Six "Six, what do you think?" "Captain I don't know about now, but during the war Todd was a good man to have around. He was one that could be trusted." Kit takes another step towards Todd. She looks him up and down, and then takes a long hard look into his eyes. She lingers there for a long time. His dark grey eyes look hard, and weathered, but behind them there is something Kit doesn't like, something almost familiar. Todd clears his throat obviously uncomfortable being started at by a 19 year old girl, and he breaks the eye contact. Kit takes another step towards Todd. She is now standing right in front of him. "Todd, I don't trust you, but Six says you're a good man. Trust with me is earned. I realize that if I don't choose to trust people then I will never get any work. So how about we take this conversation up back at my ship, but Todd I want to make one things clear." Todd looks Kit Right in eyes "If you make one move against me, my ship, or my crew I will let Six put a bullet in your brain! Are we clear?" Todd still looking uncomfortable says "Us Browncoats need to stick together. You don't need to worry about me Captain." Kit turns back to her crew "Alright folks we got what we came for, lets head back to the ship. Looks like we have another job."

As they start to pack things up and head back to the ship Kit starts to think to herself. She now has a ship, a crew, and a second job. She wonders how long this luck will keep lasting. She may be new to being a Captain and all, but there is one thing she knows well. Eventually things don't go smooth!