

Chapter 40: Part Two: June 9

The chapter opens in Barstow, California, during the aftermath of Hurricane Evonia, where the Republic's propaganda broadcasts dominate the news. Despite official reports of Day's execution, whispers among the populace suggest he survived with the help of a Republic soldier. The protagonists, Day and June, navigate the storm-soaked streets, disguised and cautious, seeking refuge in a secluded rail yard. The oppressive atmosphere underscores the constant threat of capture, while June's grief for her lost dog, Ollie, and memories of her brother, Metias, add emotional weight to their flight.

Day and June take shelter in an abandoned railway car, exhausted and soaked but relieved to find a dry space. Their banter reveals their strained yet intimate connection, with June admiring Day's resilience despite his injuries. The conversation shifts to their next steps: Day insists on finding Tess, a young girl he cares for, before heading to the warfront to rescue his brother, Eden. June, though wary of the risks, refuses to let him go alone, emphasizing their need to stick together for safety and mutual support.

Their bond deepens as they share a tender moment, kissing and reflecting on their intertwined fates. Day questions why June would risk her life for him, but she dismisses his doubts, affirming their shared foolishness. The emotional intensity peaks as they discuss their contrasting backgrounds, imagining how their lives might have been different if their roles were reversed. Day explains the symbolism behind his name, representing hope and living one day at a time, which resonates with June's own need for closure with her past.

As the storm rages outside, June and Day curl up together, finding solace in each other's presence. June privately bids farewell to her brother, Metias, drawing strength from his memory while Day watches her with understanding. The chapter closes with them awaiting dawn, their future uncertain but their resolve strengthened by their

connection. The rain and thunder mirror their turbulent journey, blending danger with fleeting moments of peace and intimacy.

