

My hands—I haven't been able to feel them since enemy contact back in Edwards. They ambushed us from the sky, like a swarm of locusts on a crop. We lost most of our platoon, and they destroyed the only route back to base camp. So we're forced to walk the Mojave Desert on foot. Seven demoralized soldiers wander, everywhere we look is a remnant of our mistake, miles upon miles of Joshua trees, rusted-out wind turbines, and an ocean of solar panels. Above all, the mockery of our curiosity casts its punishment on our backs as a reminder of our humanity. Cesar took what belonged to God, and now we are paying for it. The price? Our liberty. We now drag our feet across the desert floor in bondage to knowledge, slowly rotting from the inside. I'm trying to convince myself to continue to walk, but there is nothing left to fight for, all is lost.