

The Rust Belt

I call Speranza paradise....But every time I stare at the concrete ceilings dripping with condensation, I have to remind myself that I'm living a lie. It's just a hollowed out metro station, built with steel and old concrete. The lights down here flicker with that annoying hum, the air always smells of rusted metals and plastic.

That's home...Rows and more rows of makeshift dorms stretch around these platforms where trains once carried commuters instead of refugees. Above us, the surface belongs to the ARCs...Down here, life belongs. But every few weeks, people volunteer, or is volunteered to go topside, scouting and scavenging. If they come back, Speranza breathes a little longer. If not, someone else gets chosen.

Today was my turn... I didn't tell anyone that I got drafted to go topside, I hated it. But curiosity is a disease down here, I've been sick my whole life, I needed to see the sky, even if it got me killed.

I climbed into the launch pods, locking myself in and bracing for its engines to start.

The pod propelled itself to mach while I prayed.

Then, it stopped abruptly. When I got out of it, I felt real air for the first time in many years. The surface was a wasteland, broken highways, trees burnt into black silhouettes, and a large rust storm crawling in the horizon.



For a moment, I forgot fear existed, I walked over the ruined overpass with caution, crushing shattered glass from the old sun bleached cars. From afar I could hear shots coming from other raiders like me trying to survive.

Night up here comes fast, too fast. I stayed out longer than expected, searching for any salvageable scraps, anything that could buy me another week of electricity underground.