

**PROLOGUE.**  
**THE CIRCLE OPENS.**

Sally. Wake up now, Sally.

...lemme... lemme alone...

Wake up! You got to wake up!

**CALIFORNIA. SOMEWHERE IN THE DESERT.**  
**CHARLIE AND SALLY CAMPION.**

...what is it, Charlie, what's wrong?

You got to get dressed, honey! You got to get Baby LaVon, and we got to get outta here!

Why, is it...? Was there a fire?

Sally, honey, *don't* ask questions--you just get Baby LaVon dressed so we can hurry up and go--

I got to test the wind, see how much time we got--

*Sally Campion knew what leaving in the middle of the night meant.*

**AWOL.** Charlie was going AWOL and taking her and LaVon with him.



Won't they...?  
Won't they send  
soldiers after  
us?

Not  
tonight they  
won't.

Wind's  
blowing east  
to west. Thank  
God for that.



~cough~  
~cough~



Was there an  
accident?



Oh, Jesus,  
Mary, and Joseph,  
there *was*, wasn't  
there? An accident.  
Out there.



I was playing  
solitaire. I looked  
up and saw the clock  
had gone from green  
to red. I turned on  
the monitor. Sally,  
they're all...

...D-E-A-D  
down there.



What was it exactly?

I dunno, I don't want to know, but it kil... K-I-L-L-E-D them quick.



If I'd looked up even thirty seconds later, I'd be shut up in that tower control room right now, like a bug in a bottle...



Sally took one last look at the bungalow they'd live in for the last three years.

They were leaving their entire lives behind.



If the base gates are closed, I'm gonna crash through.

Wind's blowing west. We're going east.

It's going to be all right, hon.



By dawn, they would be riding east across Nevada, and Charlie would be coughing steadily.

**END PROLOGUE.**