

# Shady Cosgrove

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## AFTERMATH

I'm jerked awake. Metallica. It's shaking the caravan it's so fucking loud. Oh, Jimmy. He's three doors down. Old Sam and Eileen are going to have a fit, you know they are, but he can't help himself. 3 am, and we're all awake now, bearing witness to the memory of a kid just out of high school, fresh in his fatigues. Rage Against the Machine, and I push out of bed, get myself a cuppa. Sit on the front step. Air's so dry it cracks. I can't see the moon but it's there. Shrubs are just outlines. No garbage, though – the desert darkness hides that and this place almost becomes beautiful. Led Zeppelin. He'll be here soon. And sure enough he is. Skinny. Eyes ringed red. Same shirt he's been wearing for three days. 'Come here, Jimmy.' And he falls into my arms, sobbing.