

## The Fall

### The Protomen

Joe kicked the motorcycle's engine back to life. He spun the bike and raced towards the city. Passing under the cold glow of screen after menacing screen. Reports coming in of an incident in the outer rim. Reports of an armed assailant. Reports of a growing threat to public safety

Climb, climb

Joe tore through the streets. A missile aimed at the metal spire towering above the city. The great steel arm holding a torch of fear. The main telescreen was designed to be visible from almost anywhere in the city. The destruction of that screen would be felt by every man and every woman in the city. He thought of the children. How, for the first time, they would know a world without that screen. Without the constant, mind-numbing barrage of misinformation. Silence. Had he ever encountered silence? Soon

Climb to the top of the world

The street was ending. Joe revved the engine. No hesitation. No fear. The motorcycle bounded over the curb, launched off the steps in front of the tower, and landed jarringly upon the hard, slick marble of the plaza. Losing traction, the tires skidded out ahead of the heavy iron frame. The bike pitched. Joe kicked hard against the bike. Inertia kept him glued to it. He rolled over on to his stomach and clawed frantically at the smooth marble, trying to slow himself

And as you stand tall, you will see...

The bike would not be slowed. It slid rapidly toward the main entrance. The steel doors secured tightly for the evening. The wheels caught on the final few steps leading up to the doors. The bike spun upright and left the marble floor. 600 pounds of iron and chrome roared, end over end, towards the entrance, crashed into the steel doors, and exploded. Joe's momentum halted just inches from the steps. Sirens erupted around him

That when you fall...

He pushed himself to his feet and ran towards the flames. Hurdling the mangled carcass of the bike, he entered the tower lobby and headed for the stairs. Flight after flight, Joe took two and three steps at a time. His chest nearly collapsed under the strain. His legs never hesitated. Finally, he reached the door leading to the roof. Joe kicked hard and stepped into the cool night air. He had to act quickly. He threw his bag down next to

the transmitter. Reaching inside, he wrapped his hands around the detonator. Holding it tightly, he turned and started back to the stairs

You will fall from a height  
Most men will never reach

He'd taken three long strides when the explosion ripped his feet from the tarred roof. Joe didn't hear the explosion. The shock wave of the blast knocked him unconscious instantaneously

Light had nearly reached the plaza. He watched as the flames erupted from the top of the shimmering tower, setting aglow the clouds above. Among the debris cast off the building by the explosion, he spotted what could only be a human body, twisting lifelessly as it plummeted towards the earth. Light held onto the hope that the falling body was not the one he feared it must be.

As it approached the ground, Light's fears were confirmed as he made out the glare of the flames above reflected in a scarred blast shield. He watched as Joe's body landed with a dull thump upon the small patch of grass in a courtyard on the south side of the building

By the time Light had reached the boy's body, a crowd had gathered. As he stood in the center of the circle of onlookers, another explosion rattled the ground. Then another. And another. In the distance he could see, one by one, the telescreens splintering and erupting into flames