

# DETONATION NATION

*Sci-fi novel © by Kirsi Salonen*

## PART 1: INSIDE BUILDING 7

"He's really alive? Look at him.. oh god I'm gonna puke.."

Young man quickly turned around the corner and threw up all that was left of his breakfast.

"Fucking hell, private Crates! Learn to handle it already!"

Crates returned walking awkwardly holding his stomach.

"Sorry, sir. Having trouble getting used to the stench.. it's the eggs.. oh God!"

Crates ran off again looking even greener. His team mates laughed with a welcoming amusement, since the darkness and echoing silence of the tall room made everyone nervous.

"This place should be just a tomb! What's he doing here all alone? Let's hear the assignment again, sergeant Ricks", said the tall and wide-shouldered black major Banes.

"Zebra -team: Go to the South-East bay area and check buildings 6 and 7 at sector D for possible survivors. Sensors have detected moving life-signs in this area for past 18 hours, no clear heat signals, use caution."

"This doesn't make sense. Just this one guy in the middle of a fucking rubble stinking like a pile of fucking ratshit."

"Snakeshit.. sir. Pile of snakeshit."

Banes looked at private Crates in a way he could staple his mouth closed forever.

"What ever about the shit he's in! I'm saying let's just take him to the Whiteys and get outta here. If there was something here, it sure ain't around anymore. The techs have showed echoes of aged data many times before", said Ricks speaking out his mind.

All members of the team were also good friends, so nobody held back their opinions if things weren't feeling right.

"I know you wanna get to your vacation, sergeant Ricks..damn you deserve it too! But you know that we can't let this slide. It's our responsibility to help, we're the rescue-team for god's sake! He is still a human!" said major Banes next to him.

"Uh-oh..not touching that thing. Look what he did to my suit, got shit all over me. Hedge can carry him!"

Heavy steps carried their noise to the far corners of the room as Hedge stepped forward.

"Fucking whiny ladies. You complain about everything", he said with an extremely low voice, then he lifted the unconscious body to his shoulder without any effort.

"Easy for you to say, robo-man. Metal don't stink for weeks after this!" said Ricks with a grin.

Hedge's long mechanical arm was securely wrapped around the unidentified survivor as he passed the team taking the man to the armored truck.

Sergeant Ricks's uniform was covered in acid blood and it stank like a tank of rotten eggs had been poured all over him. He hated these missions, but he knew they were necessary. Seeing so much death during his 8 years of Civil Service had made him feeling bored and numb, but still he wanted to think the flow of blood will end some day and the Sun would feel friendly again.

It was his 10th and last round at the Redhead Zone before transferring to West Coast to much "liberating" tasks - a full-day annihilation-job at the center of LA. That's was his dream-job - making room for humans again in this world, no stress, no questioning, just pull the trigger and fire away with all the balls you got!

But before that could happen, he was to look for survivors here at NY and destroy all mutated violent life-forms at the top biohazard areas - places known before as population centers.

After this mission the whole team Zebra will get a two-week vacation and a full service at the Mind-tank (hologram simulation including all favorite narcotic substances what you desire, all the earthly pleasures you need, life without limitations), for being the highest ranked rescue team of the month. It was not a surprise, since most of the qualified humans were scattered all over the nation and there were only 3 independent active military organisations left after 6 years "Geo-Revolution" had started. Those who survived the last 2 years shift period consisting global spread madness, body decay and transformations, were therefore immune to cellic and genetic alterations. But time was running out faster for humans, either people admitted it or not. People of the world had to be united just to survive, before civilizations would all be vanquished and their remains left to suffer in the hands and teeth of monsters created by humanity itself.

Small amount of sand and dust was falling on Crates's cheeks from the high pitch-black ceiling. It aroused his suspicions immediately, despite everywhere was completely quiet.

"Hey guys.. We're not alone here. There's something.."

Others looked up as private Crates pointed upwards with his pulse-rifle. Something was wrong with the ceiling.. as if it was moving on its own. He

rubbed his eyes but couldn't really point out what it was.

"You crazy-talking again, Crates? Analysis gave him green light and no hostile mutation's detected in this building", major Banes said firmly.

"I think Hedge should put him down...Let's not take him with us. This is too easy."

"Hedge! is the subject still out, all's good?" Banes shouted after the cyborg, who was wrapping the man inside a locked safety-container, which would monitor his vitals and possible abnormalities before they'd be arriving back to the Core.

"Totally. He ain't giving no one any trouble. Be cool Crates. Daddy's here to back up your sissy white ass", said Hedge smiling with natural confidence.

Even Ricks had to laugh for that comment, they all laughed.

"Fuck you tinman! Fuck all you assholes!" Crates yelled nervously. His forehead was sweating under his thick helmet.

"I'm saying there's something up there we ain't seeing!"

After carefully checking up both of the buildings and seeing nothing but settling dust and quickly rotting corpses, Zebra -team wrapped up the gears and called the mission was succesful and they'd be returning home.

## PART 2: THE CORE

The Whiteys all worked at the Core's lab. They could be called as doctors, but then again it wasn't exactly their field to heal people. More likely they wanted to study how the inflicted humans change after the cell mutation had started. They were experts in chemistry, geneology, radiology and nuclear science. Whiteys developed means to change the process to directions they wanted, it was all about testing new genepools for the best and last generation of humans. They could also purify parts of the DNA strings as close as to normal human as possible, but only unless the subject proved to be extremely promising both physically and intellectually, in other words good for breeding.

The Whiteys were the board of judges deciding who's fit to live and who's not.

One of them was Miss Ceres, who worked in the anesthetic sector and was in charge of the new arrivals. Otherwise she mainly supervised that the patients with high aggression levels stayed docile.

Miss Ceres was an anomaly herself. One outbreak called Stona, which swepted across the Earth 4 years ago, had affected her bone structure in a way that her spine had to be replaced with a mechanical one. Also her lungs and heart were artificial, since the bacteria acted in a way that some organs

transformed into a rock-like structure, making them eventually die out. She was only thankful that the disease didn't reach her brains and face. All else could fall. At least her heart is strong enough to beat the next 200 years, she praised. It's that good.

"Well, well. What do we have here. A stray.. No buddies?" she asked major Banes as they transported the subject along a brightly luminated hallway.

The man was still unconscious inside the tank. All vitals looked normal, like he just was in a deep sleep.

"Yep, a loner. There was a firefight near building 6 before we found him, just a gang of juvenile Transnakes (humans contaminated with a reptilian gene, aka 'transvirus') who we took out easily. Whole thing lasted less than 30 seconds, but one of them still managed to spit its guts over Ricks here!"

"Don't blame me, sir! Crates dodged it while shooting and that monster landed straight over me gagging and spewing that green shit everywhere. So thanks a lot man!" Ricks pushed Crates playfully to the back.

"Yeah yeah... Always blame the new guy for messing up!"

Miss Ceres cut the joking abruptly: "Well if you boys would shut up for a moment and give me details of the subject. If you hand over the videostream and team databank, sergeant Ricks. I believe you're responsible of them."

Ricks pushed a small lump beside his ear and felt a slight twitch at the back of his head. A small opening appeared above his neck and he took a small round chip out, sized as small as a pinhead.

"It's all there. We can't lie to you even if we'd try", he said smiling, looking at the chip between his fingers.

Miss Ceres had detected some sarcasm in his voice.

"I'm not the one giving you orders, sergeant. If you have something to complain about, then talk to that asshole up there who got us into this mess for the first place!" she said sharply.

"Hey take it easy, hon. Didn't mean to go all personal but guess you're thinking ahead! Don't drag that executive shit on me. I didn't ruin humanity so I can goddamn complain about it!"

He was suddenly so annoyed of his reeking uniform, the cold welcome, the nagging voice of the woman and whole exhausting day so he just dropped the chip on purpose and stamped on it! It created the tiniest cracking sound imaginable, but everyone heard it as loud as thunder beside their ears.

"No orders, huh? Well that was my fucking call then!" Ricks spat out bluntly.

Banes, Crates, Hedge, Miss Ceres and two other Whiteys stared at him with disbelief and hatred in their eyes.

After a few seconds Ricks realized why and cursed out loud.

"You're suspended Ricks! Your head's started cracking up big time! You just destroyed all of our intel databank from the last four weeks! There's no vacation for anyone now you son of a bitch!"

Miss Ceres called in the security to detain Ricks. Three autoborgs in their

metalsuits came instantly surrounding him.

"I'm very disappointed in you, sergeant Alex Richter. You just threw your career to the drain."

Ricks knew this was turning bad very quickly. One slip with temper at the wrong time and this was the result. What in the hell was he thinking?

"You've pulled stupid stunts before but this time you dragged the whole team with ya. Deleting harvested data is unacceptable!" said Banes sounding like a judging father to him.

"I'm letting you go, man."

"What? Where the hell would I go then? You need me out there! I'm the best fireman you got!"

"You need to get your head checked, Ricks. I can't afford to take anymore risks with a loose end like you.. 'Control rage' is our first rule and you still can't obey one simple order without making a scene of it."

Everyone knew that if there was a reason to suspect mental sanity within the Core, then the reason would be corruption from outside. To most soldiers there was no turning back if this happened.

"You're giving me to the Whiteys now? We're friends, Banes! Breaking the chip was stupid of me, I apologise. Goddammit don't do this, man. People make mistakes and I admit that already!"

His team mates looked at him with unforgiving eyes, except Hedge always looked indifferent. They had given up on him already. Ricks was a goner.

"Sorry Alex. No weak links in my team", said Banes.

He squeezed Ricks's shoulder once and then turned away walking back to the hallway entrance. Others followed him without saying a word.

"Hey fuckers.." Ricks said quietly looking down, making them stop and look back in the midway.

"Now I understand what true friendship means. 8 years, Banes.. 8 fucking years at the same side.. you can't be serious about this!"

"Guess we'll see ya on that other side, Richter", said Hedge, still sounding indifferent as the elevator shutter closed.

Sudden fear gripped him as he understood his situation. They'd turn him to a veggie like the other test subjects. His memory would be erased and he wouldn't see outside world ever again. He hit one of the guards so hard that its neck twitched causing a temporary short-circuit, then tried to make a run for it. Other two autoborgs managed to catch him fast and he was forced to the ground.

A sharp sting from a needle hit him to the neck making him completely limp. Whiteys grabbed his arms and Miss Ceres instructed taking him away along with the new arrival. She'll be deepscanning them both this evening.

She really loved her job.

### PART 3: LOOSE ENDS

*"Open your eyes, child of God. You're alive."*

Violence is a primal instinct. Violence makes you move. Everything requires violence to work. Even thoughts are violent. Particles are violent against each other. Everything fights violently to survive. Without violence there's no movement, no strength, no life.. anywhere at all.

Man invented a counterpart for violence and called it love. It's not an opposite, this is proven false long ago. Since love is also violent, it breaks everything apart. This world is nothing but violence.

Brightness inside the pod blinded his vision as he slowly awoke. He could hear his breathing inhaling an exhaling loud, all his muscles tremored from weakness. His mind was so full of pain that it felt like physical torment, screaming only one thing: "LET ME DIE!"

Hands pounded the vertically placed sleep tank until he broke the round looking glass. He stretched his arm and managed to open the door from outside. Right after the door's pressure dropped he fell to the freezing floor. He shouldn't be able to move and most certainly not break the glass, but still he did. He was shaking rapidly, tens of different hoses, tubes and wires were attached to his body, he was naked and completely shaved, unable to understand why he was awake and how much time had passed. Blood drops splattered from his knuckles as he ripped the EKG-pads and wires off.

He took a moment calming himself and managed to get up on his feet. After looking around he saw nobody coming after him. He was alone in a very cold massive hall. Then he blinked his leaking sore eyes again and witnessed hundreds of similar tanks around him, continuing far distance in all directions. Constant humming of life support systems and moving scanners passed by the tanks. Everywhere was thumping, clanking, hissing of the cooling systems, rattling of processors, beeping and high pitch of various electrical frequency patterns. He was so in the middle of technological wonderland that it made him more desperate and aware of his loneliness. He had never realized the size of this facility. Had it gone bigger just recently or had he been out for years?

*"Cut me loose, please."*

He startled and looked around but saw nobody. Just the voice sounded like it spoke directly inside his head.

*"Alex. Help me."*

"Where are you?" he asked, barely recognizing his own voice. It was all broken and thin after the coma.

*"Corridor 82 at level 4...pod 167.. please hurry. We don't have much time before they see again."*

All of the bright spotlights were suddenly switched off and a moment later the

reserve lighting illuminated the place to ominous green atmosphere. Alex started running towards the exits. He had no idea why he acted so fast and wanted to listen to that voice. It was so..empowering.

He found the strong steel hatchdoor, but it was electrically locked from outside. Red flashing light indicated that there was a lock-down in the whole sector. He had to think faster, no way he could open those shutters without a code. Alex looked up and saw that the piled up tanks were hooked together with long steelbars coming down from the ceiling which also lead to the ventilator shafts. That's his exit.

He started climbing up. As he made his way higher, he could see rows and rows of pods in at least 10 levels and continuing horizontally for hundreds of meters.

"How in the hell can I ever find you here? There's too many.." he asked in frustration.

*"Climb. You're stronger than you believe."*

And he climbed..and climbed.. his fingers bled because of the sharp-edged bars but he kept on climbing until he reached level 4. Finally at 20 feet from him he could see the tank number 167, so he jumped from pod to pod to reach it. On top of it he grabbed the door handle and pulled as hard as he could. There was a blast of the pressure and the man inside would have fallen off if Alex hadn't caught him. He pulled the limp person out despite he was utterly exhausted.

While lying on the pod and removing the tubes with his trembling hands, the man suddenly reached out to him in desperation, but his mouth didn't actually speak anything but incomprehensible mutter and his wide-spread eyes didn't see anything, the pupils were bright white.

To Alex's surprise he was the same man they had found in building 7 - now without the stench. He had a very fair skin, a strong type of body and he was also shaved like most subjects there.

*"You have to carry me, Alex. I can't feel my own body"*, the voice said clearly inside his mind.

"I can't.. it's not in me.. I'm totaled. You're too heavy", he answered desperately.

*"Then we both die if you don't. There's a bridge at the upper level. Take us there."*

"Gimme a minute.." Alex answered while catching his breath. Then he started to think about his options, which weren't many but one.

He wrapped the man to his back by using the hoses as straps. It felt like a ton of bricks, but he focused to keep his soldier's discipline and gathered up all his rage towards his wasted life and grabbed to the steelbars once more. This time he used silicon breathing tubes around his hands for a better grip.

The bridge was just up ahead. He pushed himself forward until his heart felt like exploding any minute. At last he pulled himself over the railing and the other rolled off from his back onto the bridge.

At that moment main power was restored inside the facility, lights came up again and right after that an ear-piercing sound of the general alarm.

"Oh shit, they saw us! The borgs are here at any second! Come on! Help me, get up!" he crawled to the man and got him up on his shaking feet.

The stranger slowly nodded his head pointing left and tried to stand on his own but all his efforts failed. Alex had to hold him all the time.

*"Take me to the door over there. To the controls.. there's a small storage room."*

"But you're blind! How do you know that?"

*"Move it Alex!"*

#### PART 4: KNOW WHO YOU ARE

As soon as they approached the door, there was a click at the other side and it opened up.

"You did that?" Alex gasped.

The man barely could move his legs but he seemed to be gaining strength very slowly, his grip tightened as he took support of the railing and Alex. They entered the room and waited a while that no sound of any guards were approaching. There was no other way out of the room. The soldier made sure that there was no security cameras there and barred the door by sticking a steely maintenance washerpipe between the shutter handles.

*"We can stay here for a little while. In the back there's a locker filled with uniforms. Dress up."*

There was a locker filled with brand new uniforms just like he said, also heavy armory of weapons waiting to be put into use.

"Who are you, man? Some sort of failed experiment?" Alex finally got to ask while latching a combat vest around his chest.

*"My name's not relevant.. nor is my body."*

"It is to me! I mean you have an idea where we found you at? You were inside a toxic waste dump, covered in rotting transnake's shit! But you can actually talk through minds and open doors and everything! Whatta fuck is that? That's something unseen with mutations!"

*"You can call me anything you want. Just don't forget who you are. You're much more important than me."*

"Ok I call you Oz then, since you're totally a marvel wizard to me. We gotta think of a plan before they find us here and probably try gasing us out since they know we have weapons. Hey.. What did you mean I'm more important than you?"

The whole place shook like an earthquake or bomb had just hit the facility. Lights flickered a while and then a digital message was heard from the

doorspeaker:

**"Attention to all units! We're under attack, enemy has located our base and broken our defence lines. The Core's exposed to a massive security breach. All non-military personnel must evacuate the perimeter before enemy will launch a biological attack to this area. Any employee without their heavy biosuits is restricted entering the emergency ships. Please do not panic. God help us all. Over."**

"Now that's what I call luck!" Alex laughed in relief.

To him combat situations against monsters were playtime compared avoiding pure human watch. Still he didn't understand why the alarm didn't go off because of them at all. Did Oz do that too? This means Core wouldn't be even concerned about the escape. All of this was proven to be a fantastic opportunity.

Oz swayed from side to side trying to keep his balance on the bench. He was breathing heavily. His vision seemed to clarify though, Alex could sense he began to see something.

"You need water, man? The supplies most likely have energy drinks somewhere too. We're not in a hurry anymore, it seems. Just gotta wait until the evacuation's passed, then we can slide out easily and disappear, trust me. We got new biosuits, plasmacannons and everything."

*"We have to go now.. right this moment. Must stop them.. Don't worry about my health, it's not your concern. Alex. They're everywhere...always find me... Aahrgh!"*

Alex rushed to catch Oz before he fell down from the bench holding his head between his hands. The man was trembling and burning hot.

"If you want out now, then you got it. Fuck, we're leaving this hellhole!"

Alex lifted Oz on his feet and quickly put a kevlar-vest on him, then wrapped him to a protective biocloak, what would effectively prevent any mobile scanner from seeing his heat-trace.

The soldier himself wanted to be seen. He wanted rumble.

"Hang in there, my strange friend", he said and felt more determined than never before in his life.

LAST PART : THE FIREMAN

Everyone knows what primal fear means in this world. It's about trying to prevent hysteria taking over the mind and soul. It's about keeping your mission on sight even when all nine Heavens are about to fall down and evils

of Hell unleashed against you. Fear is always near, but who's in the controls? A man rolls on burning ash and can hear his own flesh frying up because of phosphore bombshell is carving its way into his thighbone, and still he gets up and continues his mission without knowing what or who he fights for. The man sees people getting permanently sick because of unpure drugs, genoshots (gene manipulating vaccinations), toxic water and pesticided food and finds them being completely insane without their own will.

Transforming from human to transhuman is the worst blow.. that's the time when man learns that concept of human love is truly dead in the world. He learns it as his own flesh and blood and friends he thought knowing well suddenly hates him more than anything on this earth because of being a human. Then everything begins to crumble down, each achievement, safe haven and newborn child on the planet becomes a sacrament of hate, existing only to serve one purpose – control death in every way.

The man's forced to experience death on daily basis and live with constant loss and suffering around him. As years go by and things get worse, he quits asking what is 'mercy' to those who have forgotten his/her own human instincts. Therefore he clears his vision to a much simpler point of view; unable to understand the difference between a highly controlled confinded life and life with a free mind consisting of endless choices.

He knows no choices.

Sadly but without a doubt, he shuts down the qualities which separates him from the monster he hates from the start and chooses a life of a machine, who does not have desire to laugh, need or cry for the sake of painful reality – but only does what he's made to do, because it's necessary. That ultimately becomes the catalyst of annihilation of mankind.

The man becomes a tool. The Core's solution to each of the multiple crisis situations were always the same: either you are captured alive, or you die as a hunted. There was no middle ground for inner conflict in any situation.

Those men who have no inner conflicts but act for their given porpose, begin to radiate such strong energy that it spreads like a poisonvine over lesser beings. That energy unevitably turns life against life and only solution to gain 'peace' is actually war. Chaos becomes the only master worth serving willingly. Restoring order to that kind of universe becomes a lifelong mission without an end. For some men it means that death doesn't even exist, but rather a road to victory. That everything is done by justified reasons and with a clear conscience.

But life does not care about its direction or purpose. From captivity it only breaks free, from driest deserts it searches new ways to stretch, spread and explore, and by doing so it longs for love of life even more. From the smallest atoms to greatest of beasts it continues just the same. It desires to be what it's always meant to be. That kind of mechanics is still unknown to human heart, even when every secret and every detail of existence is charted and calculated and explained, the engine that drives man towards what he believes is right remains a mystery. Despite it truly isn't. It's just the desire to know what you really are.

That happened to Alex, as he knew he was the underdog in every way. But it didn't stop him from doing the things he did. This time he wouldn't fight because he had to, but because he wanted it. He knew this was right and

realizing this made his heart tremble in fear. Even more he was scared of loosing Oz – the man he first thought was just human garbage, who he refused to touch.

”Hey Oz.. I wanna ask you something and I'd really appreciate an honest answer”, he said while they were going down in a fray elevator, that went to the now hostile C-Wing. From there they could continue heading to underground railway tunnels and hopefully get out without facing a full army of transhumans. Or worse - humans Ricks already knew.

”You.. you wish to know if there's a life after death”, Oz said quietly. His voice sounded really melancholy, but clear.

”Hey, you do speak after all.”

”I'm learning fast.”

”It's not very cool to read me through like that. It makes me feel even more stupid than I feel now.”

”You're far from stupid. You're a soldier with a mind of his own. You recalled it back.”

Ricks's eyes started burning and he had to make up a cough for not letting Oz's words affect him too much. The pressure was becoming overwhelming. His whole life was one big bottle of pressure always wanting to explode.

”Well.. you have an answer for me, Wizard of Oz?” he asked without looking at him.

”One life, Alex. One true life. That's all you need to know. That's all any human needs to know. Nothing else is relevant but understanding it's simplicity.”

”Fuck. And I thought you'd give me some godly dimensional shit and make me feel tremendously lot better.”

Oz looked at him under his deep hood. Some parts of his pupils were gaining a pale blueish tone.

”I want to thank you, Alex..For everything you've done for both of us.”

”I still haven't gotten us out. As we get down, just stay behind me. So don't thank me yet.”

Oz straightened his aching weak back and looked down to the dark elevator shaft, with tears in his eyes.