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Icecold purgatory

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As our existence ended, so did our hope. As we were banished away from the warmth, we came to realize that we dug our own grave. Our inventions had turned against us. The only thing that is left, is snow and stone. Our lives are hanging on a frozen thread, making our lives futile in this world.

## chapter 1

March 15th, year 0003 a.Flo

"Redpelt to Base Nova Redpelt to base Nova."

It was silent at the other side of the line.

"Base Nova to Redpelt. Come in."

"Hey Julia, how is it going out there?"

"Cold, but my leg is feeling better, although it still hurts. But what is it?" she replied.

"Our security check is complete. No sign of them near the watchpost boarder."

"Noted. Thanks Redpelt." The other end of the line replied.

"Redpelt out."

I put away the device. It was good to be in a warmer area again.

The other scouts must be back by now. I pull my goggles over my

orange furred ears. I looked in the distance. The sunset made the

sky orange with pink clouds. This together with the white snow

formed a magical sight. I stared for a while and put on my goggles.

"Julia, I'm coming back."

"Copied."

On my way back I saw a few little settlements of tents. Children playing in the snow. A woman waved to them to go inside as I rode by the tents on my snow scooter.

"Redpelt to Base Nova. I have to visit someone."

"Base to Redpelt, don't take too long."

Five miles away from the camp, I stopped the scooter and got off.

I walked a minute among the trees. I stopped in an open place

surrounded by big pine trees. I opened a trapdoor after whipping off

the snow. I pulled out a folded chair, a folded table, two wine

glasses and a bottle of red wine. I folded out the chair 1 meter

away from a tombstone. I put down the table and poured the wine

in the two glasses.

"Hey. I'm back. We now have a more advanced metal workshop since the last time I spoke you. Our borders are still safe."

It was silent for a while.

"I still miss you so much. There is no day going by that I don't think of you."

I took a sip of the wine.

"Sarah can walk much better now. Her new leg fits her pretty well, and she learns to use it better every day."

I smiled.

"They painted it pink with butterflies. They even made the foot as a princesses shoe. You should have seen her eyes sparkle the moment they adapted the foot to it."

I put back the wine, glasses, chair and little table and started the scooter.

"WAIT!"

My ears got up. I looked through the trees.

"Who are you?" I asked.

The panda looked strong. His most interesting feature was a bionic eye.

"Jacob Pandorus, can you give me a ride back to your base?"

I pulled my gun and pointed at him.

"Are you one of them?"

"Them?" He asked.

I came closer, still pointing the gun at him. I rolled up his sleeve.

"bleep bloop. Just messing with you"

After I was certain that it was safe I took a step back.

"Jesus, you scared the hell out of me. I'm glad we have another survivor. Hop on, but hold on tight." I said.

I hopped on the scooter, and gave the new one my spair goggles.

The engine roared when I turned the switch

"I'm from camp Omicron. It was destroyed." The panda said.

"Camp Omicron destroyed? When? How? The border security was okay right?"

"We had a entire civilization inside a mountain and they collapsed it." The panda replied.

"Redpelt to Nova."

"Nova to Redpelt."

"I have a Survivor. I repeat I have a survivor." I spoke.

"Have you checked him?" said the other side.

"Yes, he is clear."

The sun shone bright on the snow on the mountain hills. Despite the cold, the view did not disappoint in the slightest. The carpet of white that covered the mountain looked so clean and pure, especially with the light of the sun reflecting on it.

We stopped when we had reached the camp.

A leopard and a beagle came up to us.

"Morning Redpelt."

"Morning Angus." I replied to the beagle.

The beagle rolled his eyes.

"How many times do I need to ask you to call me mr. McMurray.

Anyhow, what is this? Another survivor? Have you checked him?"

"Of cou-" I started.

The beagle grabbed a pocket knife and opened it.

"Jesus put that bloody thing away. I've been checked already." The panda reacted a bit surprised.

The beagle put the knife away.

"I'm sorry, but we can't take any risk."

He reaches out his hand.

"As you heard, I'm Angus McMurray."

"Jacob pandorus. Nice to meet ya." The panda shook his hand.

The leopard gestured to follow her.

"I'm Julia by the way. Follow me, so I can show you where you sleep. It is not every day that we get new survivors in."

"Thanks. Do you have a quiet isolated room?"

"Why would we need that?"

We walk past the smith and the improvised hospital.

"For meditation." The panda replied.

"We must have one somewhere." Julia replied a bit uninterested.

She stopped at a few bunkers.

"I know they don't seem inviting from the outside, but you can make them as cozy as you want."

She opened the door to a 5 by 3 meters room.

There were already a few pieces of furniture, like a bed, and the walls were painted green.

"Are there any plans?" The panda asked.

"Plans in what way?" Julia asked.

"Exploration teams?"

"We have our standard security checking squads checking the border once a week. Besides that everyone here in Base Nova has a task or a role to fulfill." The female leopard answered.

The beagle tapped me on the shoulder.

"Redpelt, do you have a moment?"

"Yeah sure, what is it?"

The beagle guided me to a bunker. He opened the door and I followed him through it.

"One of our scouts saw something out there." Angus said directly. I felt confused. There hasn't been anything unusual in a really long time.

"Like what?" I asked.

"We are not sure, but he saw organic movement. As in a person."

"What?! Really?"

"Now I want to ask you to check it out." Commander McMurray asked, already feeling what way I would respond.

I felt the urge to protest, but by the look on his face it would not be such a good idea.

"I know what you're thinking. It is dangerous as hell out there. But we need this information. If this could give us an advantage against them, then all the people who are not here today have not died in vain." He said.

I remained silence. I never wanted to go back there. After all that has happened.

"I want you to lead a squad. I think we could miss 5 people. You have acces to the guns and bullets might you need them. Other weapons are also to your command."

"Yes sir..." I said.

Apparently he could sense my disappointment and resistance. He reached in his pocket and held up a key.

"I might consider to give you and your squad acces to the special food supply." The beagle said, holding the key in front of me.

This offer did raise my spirit. Food was hard to produce. There weren't factories who would produce thousands and thousands of products per day. We had to grow them ourselves. Or eat from a big stack of canned food.

"Really? That would be great. I haven't eaten something culinair in 3 months."

Angus opened the door and I walked out back in to the cold.

"By the way, when do we leave?" I questioned.

"You have three days to prepare." The commander replied.

"Yes sir."

And with those words I walked away. I did not want to go. The only thing you would find there is death, destruction and the aftermath of those two combined. The landscape was a lot different then the skyline it once was. Now half of the skyscrapers had fallen over or collapsed. The cities now probably looked like a forest after a tsunami. With all it's trees over the forest floor, and broken branches everywhere. Where once were busy streets, were now cracked roads, raided cars and rubble everywhere.

I got my thoughts back on track and looked around.

So where did that panda go? I tapped a woman on the shoulder.

"Have you seen a panda bear?" I asked politely.

"I saw him going to the gate."

I walk away fast. I take the key to the gun closet and take my sniper rifle from the closet. A few moments later I get on my snowscooter and ride out of the gates. I got stopped by a panda a few seconds after I got out of the gate.

"Why are you here? Get back in stupid. Don't wonder off like that!"

"I needed to check something. It was important."

"Important enough to freeze?" I said annoyed.

"Yes. Although I don't really think that will be happening any time soon." The panda replied in a calm manner.

A little suspicious I inspect the man.

"What was so important then?"

"I can't tell. That is..."

The bear doubted for a second.

"...Personal."

When we got back to base I give a last warning look to the newfound survivor and open my own room.

When I layed my head down to rest, the soft feeling of the pillow embraced me.

When I finally gathered all the energy to open my eyes again, it was probably morning. The fact that the world outside was so damn cold almost made me roll back in sleeping position. Eventually I found the courage to get dressed and open the door. I got greeted by the new survivor.

"Morning" Jacobus greeted.

"Hey."

After a little consideration I decided I should take what I could get. I wanted to ask you something. I need a team to investigate something. I know it will be dangerous, so you can still say no."

"I will hang up a note in the middle of the noteboard."

"I'm in."

"Uhm... okay great." I replied.

"Where d'you left my shotgun by the way?" The panda said, jumping from one subject to another.

"Oh yeah. I delivered it to the gun storage."

"Damn that's mine. Didn't you saw the art on it?" the panda said, slightly annoyed.

He ran to the gun storage.

"You forgot the keys."

I nonchalantly held them up on my fingertip.

"Then come here and open it"

"Only if you can help me scout 3 more people."

"Yeah Yeah." He said hastily.

I followed the panda.

The panda opened the storage and took back his gun.

"never do this again please." Jacobus said firmly.

"Actually it is the policy here that only the scouts and combat related personel can walk around armed. I will keep it with me, so that would be a better place then the gun storage."

The bear growled something in forced approval.

We walk back to his room

"soo, an expedition I heard? Why?" the panda asked.

"Our scouts saw something important in the wasteland.

So I was asked to gather a squad and investigate it. That is all that you need to know."

I saw a slight distrust in his expression. I did not need him to trust me. I only need him to cooperate.

"okey, come in" he said.

He opened his room.

I walked in. It was cozy in my opinion. I decided that I should take notes for my own room.

He hung the shotgun next to the other

"so, back where you belong"

Satisfied the panda looked at it and corrected the position so that it was perfectly aligned

"I have a question." He said.

"What is it?" I replied, while looking around for a chair or something to sit on.

"Why is there a second bed?"

"We are having someone over from Base Epsilon." I responded.

"Who?" The panda asked while inspecting his own bed.

"I don't know yet Jacobus. But I heard she was good at.... I can't remember."

"Hmm. Okay. Are we taking her with us?" He asked.

"Maybe. I already made a note on the noteboard that we need two more coming along. Now I'm waiting for the those two to sign in."

I opened the door, letting the cold air in.

"I'm going to see if I can find anyone. In the meantime, you can get some rest." I said to the new recruit. I didn't need him around questioning every molecule he encountered.

I walked around the barracks. Melissa and Jimmy ran past us with a ball. Who could I take for this trip?

They're too young. I couldn't even consider them useful.

They have already been through so much. Their mother died in the flood and their father went missing. No we need more capable people. My eye falls on woman. Her entire look made her seem dangerous.

I know her. She was here before I came here. Her name is Cora. I don't know her very well. But I think indeed that she is a good choice. When I called her name she walked over.

"Yes?"

“can I talk to you about something?”

I gestured that we should talk somewhere private.

When we got somewhere where we were alone, she sat down.

“What is it fox?” She said sternly, as if to prove that she was as much of a soldier as I was.

“I need to ask you something. I never really talked to you a lot, but you seem perfect for the occasion.”

Apparently I got her interest, because she repositioned so she could properly pay attention.

I continued.

“I got orders to investigate the wasteland.”

Her look betrayed her thoughts, and those did not seem too positive.

“I need a team to assist me in this. I don’t want to go either. None of us do. But if this could bring a positive influence in here, Ang... McMurray thinks it is worth it.”

The feline considered the offer for a second, but then agreed.

## chapter 2

Her arrival yesterday went smoothly. She got received by a beagle named Angus. He seemed nice. Maybe this cold place had something interesting to offer. After a good night sleep she thought it would be a good idea to get to know the place. The girl heard some people talking. They talked about a mission or something. Interested she walked to the conversation.

"Hey, I heard you're looking for candidates for a mission. If you want to tell me more about it, maybe I want to join."

She looked both of them in the eyes and smiled.

"And you are...?"

"How stupid, I will introduce myself. I'm Sophie. I've come from base Epsilon."

"d'you think you can handle it?"

"Yeah, I have had lessons with rifles and guns and defending myself."

I inspected her.

When I looked in her eyes they reflected the bravery of a soldier. As if she had seen things enough for a lifetime.

She leaned on one leg to the other with her one hand on her hip and smiled.

"So, what is the mission." She said.

"We need to investigate something in the wasteland"

"That sounds interesting. I'm coming with you." She smiled.

I wanted to ask what her motive could possibly be for going to the wasteland willingly, but her eyes told me not to.

"Where d'you stay" The panda asked.

"In this base, I have received a room here close to a Leopard named Julia. But that doesn't matter. So, a five men operation?"

I knocked on the door of the showers.

"Julia, are you done?"

I heard quick movements and quickly after she opened the door.

"What is it? You are lucky I already got dressed."

I hesitated. This was a hard question in general.

“Uhm, do you... If I would ask you if... I-“

“What is it Redpelt?” Said Julia irritated.

"I wanted to ask you if you would come with me and 3 others on a mission. We could use you."

"Fuck no!"

She slammed the door shut. As a distraction she continued checking her bag if she had everything. Why would she ever go there again? What could possibly be out there? How did he even dare to ask it? He knew damn well that she felt blessed inside the walls of base Nova.

'Mom, wait for me.'

'Hurry up benjamin. Otherwise we will be too late. Do I need to carry you? Or can you run a little longer?'

'My legs hurt.'

'Mine too sweetie. But we have to keep running okay.'

When she realized that she had been packing the wrong soap, the bottle flew to the other side of the cabins.

"Stupid fox."

She opened the door and ran after me.

I heard her footsteps and turned around.

"Yes?"

".....I'm in."

3,5 years ago

"Hey, what do we eat for dinner? Shall I make wraps again?"

I looked through the kitchen door from the couch. Rick was looking around searching for something.

"Shall we order pizza?"

I heard a growl of approval from across the kitchen.

The grey husky came looking from behind the couch.

"Did you find something interesting yet?"

"Not ye-ooeeh. They will be sending out 'walk among tombstones' on OTTER."

"Wasn't that the one with the sergal in it... uhm..."

He held his fist to his mouth as if that would help him think. He always did that when he thinks.

"Adam Ridge?"

"Yes, him! Thank you."

"I think he is an excellent actor. He displays emotions perfectly."

"You think? In my opinion Betta Umbral does it well too."

I flip the page.

"Wasn't she the black panther?"

"Yup. She won an award recently."

He grabbed the phone and ordered our usual pizza order.

When the delivery was done I tapped with my hand on the couch. He sat next to me and I layed my head on his lap as I stretched over the couch.

"Funny fur will be on soon."

He grabbed the remote and switched on the TV. With his other hand he tapped my head. The show started as usual with an intro of a few shots from episodes from ages ago. The logo came by and then the first fragment started. It was a raccoon kid yelling at his mom. All of a sudden she gave him a nutkick. I tried to keep my laugh in, but ended up giggling. I felt his belly shake too. The next fragment started for one second when all of a sudden the intro of the news came on.

"Owkay..."

"Shh."

"This is an emergency broadcast. Scientists have made a breakthrough in the field of our climate change. According to their study we need to reinforce the dams worldwide as they predict a giant flood, the biggest in 300 years. They did not yet pinpoint a date, but they say it is a real reason for a state of alarm. This is also a warning. Stay at home, don't travel to other countries if not necessary."

### chapter 3

"Can you follow me?"

We walked across the camp to find that panda. I already saw that woman he chose somewhere earlier. Now I need to find the new girl from the other base.

"Where is that stupid panda?" I grumbled.

"I saw him walk to the farm."

"Thanks Julia." I said before walking off.

When I reached the crop fields I took a moment to look around. There were two greenhouses where they planted wheat. We did not have a lot of bread, but when we did it was considered a royal meal. And with the taste of canned beans and rice every day I couldn't disagree. Outside were ricefields. They weren't very big, but we tried to keep them warm and clean of snow. There were a few solar panels that generated heat so the roots wouldn't freeze, and a watering system that would fertilize the plants with a push of a button. I saw that people were already out there working. The panda arrived from the other side of the path.

"morning, Fox..... We're going? "

I noticed that one of his personal traits is being direct and practical.

"Not yet. We will leave tomorrow morning. We have access to the food storage tonight. And I want to talk things through with you all."

"Oke d'you got the rest?"

"Still need to find those two others. If you see them, tell them they need to meet me at the central hall."

"Cora is here with me. She is walking somewhere in the fields."

"Okay." See you there."

I headed to the great hall. Once arrived, I opened the door and the improvised lock. The light of artificial lamps seemed colder than the winter sun outside. It was some form of structure which already stood here before the flood. It seemed to be an ancient Asian building. That was visible from the building style and the pillars as support for the roof. The floor consisted of big stone squares with lines in between. This gave the feeling of a tennis court.

The sound of the door announced the arrival of the others.

I walked to the other door somewhere in a hallway connected to the hall. The door was locked with a chain and a hanging lock. I grabbed the key from my pocket.

When I finally had all the food we needed, and a table set up, I finally could come down to business.

The panda suspiciously inspected the food. He really started to annoy me. First he acted like he was here for forever. Next he disobeyed orders. And lastly he questioned the food, which should be a privilege to eat.

"wouldn't it be wrong to taste everything first so we know the others won't get poisoned"

"Why on earth would want to poison us?"

He quickly put the food down.

"Sophie is coming in a few minutes."

Sophie rushed into the great hall, as if it was a rehearsal for a play.

"sorry, I couldnt find it right away!"

I gestured that it wasn't a problem.

Without waiting very long I put down my fork and stood up.

It was hard to tell. It felt as if it wasn't the right thing to do.

But this had to be done. If Angus gave this order, it would be for a good reason.

"I think you all know why we're here. Tommorrow we will enter the wasteland. This will be a longer expedition."

"Okay. Why?" Cora asked.

"Because it is a long way from here to where we need to go." I answered.

"Well, what is the mission?"

"Our mission is to investigate an organic movement, which would indicate a big development of knowledge for us. I am going through some things with you. First, always make sure you have enough ammo. Second, don't hesitate to kill. If you won't, they will."

I stopped a second to see if everyone understood. When they appeared to understand what I said, I continued.

and third, If you have to leave someone behind, do it. Don't hesitate or you will get killed."

The atmosphere was definitely different than before.

I sat down and continued to eat.

Julia sat next to me. Her plate was still empty.

I looked at her. "Dig in. We got permission for this."

The dinner went smoothly. Everyone enjoyed. Yet the entire time there was a feeling of approaching thunder hanging in the room. As if the we were all waiting for an execution.

When I finally decided to leave the dinner I left the keys on the table.

"You may get the guns and the ammo you need. I already took my sniper rifle and the ammunition for it."

I wanted to close the door but reconsidered.

"I also took two pistols."

"I might also have taken a knife." I continued.

Julia grinned a little.

"Did you take a tank and the doomsday cannon as well?" she teased. I smiled back sarcastically.

"I have left those for you. You might need them more than me." she held her hand on her forehead and grinned a little.

Jacobus took the keys and made his way to the storage.

A few moments later he came back with the keys "I'm loaded" two belts of ammunition gleamed in the cold light of the cylinder lamps.

"tomorrow morning we have to be up soon I guess."

Cora squeezed herself past the bear and grabbed two machetes and one machine pistol

"Yup. So lets take a good night rest. See you all tomorrow." I declared. Cora was gone the moment I said so.

"I dont want to be annoying, but can I take some ammo and weapons too? Nobody gave me the keys..." Sophie asked quietly.

"Sure go ahead." Jacobus responded.

He tossed her the keys for her to grab them out of the air.

she smiled friendly, turned around and walked to the storage room.

I got a loud knock on my door the next morning. The steel door amplified the slamming sound on it. The sound echoed through in

my state of rest, which was immediately gone and disrupted. The warm cover of the night got replaced by the cold embrace of the day.

"MORNING." Sounded through the door.

I rubbed some sleep out of my eyes. I opened the bedsheet and sat on the edge of the mattress.

"Give me a second to get dressed." My raw morning voice said as I mentally prepared to stand up. But instead my mind demanded five more minutes of sleep, so I fell back down and almost immediately closed my eyes again.

"Come on, I have fixed something for today"

The metal sound of the door got me back up again.

Ten minutes later I opened the door, dressed and ready.

The moment the cold entered the room, a big panda armed with 2 big machetes, and 2 shotguns pulled me out of the room and drags me outside.

"Look."

The panda showed me a small helicopter. There were 5 parachutes on board. It was a real army vehicle.

"You almost overslept. Sadly enough someone woke you up, so now we have to take you with us." I heard Julia say behind me. She had brushed her fur and wore a flexible leather coat with a fluffy collar around her neck.

"go get the others, I'll start the heli" The panda said.

"I'm in command here. I'll get the others. Can you start the heli Sophie? I heard that you were an excellent pilot."

"Already on it." Sophie answered.

The feline opened the door of the vehicle and prepared herself.

I took a last check on the backpacks. Food, medical supplies, ammo, guns, suitcase with EMP. That would be sufficient enough. The EMP I'd rather not use, but if I had to, it was a final resort for a reason. I threw them into the heli and went searching for the others.

Cora ran to the helicopter. With the blades spinning the wind that was created almost blew her away.

"Get on board." Julia reached out and pulled her up.

Slowly the aircraft left the ground and began to depart.

"everybody ready"

"Ready."

As the helicopter took off the wind produced by the machine blew up some snow. The sound of the machine was really loud.

"HOW LONG UNTIL WE GET THERE?"

"ABOUT 6 HOURS."

"Anyone fear of heights? Or rollercoaster?" The panda said while grinning obviously.

4 years ago

Rick looked up from his book as I opened the bedroom door.

"Already back from work?"

"Is two hours after dinner too early for you?"

I smirked and slowly walked to the bed.

"Not at all." It came out smoothly, just as the mood would suggest.

The only source of light was the artificial light of the lamp on the nightstand. He put his book away. I put down my bag. I sat down on the edge of the bed. I felt two arms around my neck and a hand on my chest, which pulled my on the bed.

"How was your day Chris?"

The whole scenario felt so warm and inviting. I felt loved. I put my head to rest on his grey chest. I could feel his heartbeat quicken.

I could feel his slow steady breath lifting his chest.

I felt his muscles move when he rolled on top of me.

I kissed him slowly.

"I thought you huskies did not like to be on top?" I said teasingly.

"Hmm. What else do I need to do with a fox in my bedroom then?"

I moved my hand over his gray furred back as if my hand was moving through grass.

"That is just a stereotype."

We kissed again.

"Can you prove it?" He teased back.

I doubted for a second.

"Uhm no."

He moved his hand down my stomic. Slowly, sensually. The more a relationship grows and the older it gets, the more that desire flows over in appreciation. I felt that this was his way of appreciating me.

I moved my hand through his hair. It was so soft. I kneaded it between my fingers. I never wanted this embrace to end.

"Rick, before we continue..."

He kissed me in my neck.

"I want to tell you that I really like our new apartment."

The grey husky looked up, with the key on a necklace between his teeth.

"Couwd we tawk about fhe houfe lafer?"

## Chapter 4

Time past, and while the majority of us decided to take a nap, Jacobus remained awake. Just like Julia.

Julia moved over to the panda, since three hours of boring flight almost forced her into a conversation.

"So. You are the new one?" She started.

Jacobus nodded. The conversation quickly ended.

After another eternity passed, there was a shout from the cockpit.

"hold on guys, we go stealth mode."

Sophie shut off the engine and the airplane starts to lose altitude.

I grab on to the walls, wide awake by the feeling of zero gravity. pulling me up.

"Nononononono fuck. Sophie!"

"SHUSH. or do you want to be noticed?" came from the cockpit.

Silenced by the feline I anxiously let this happen.

On a height of 250 meters she pulled the heli-jet straight and we glide on the wind we created with our drop. I roughly got pulled back in place by the sudden stop of our fall. My stomach did not like this.

"Stupid feline. Why?" I growled.

I still feel myself shaking.

"Some robots can hear heli-jets from miles" Sophie answered.

"And now not anymore. If it gets dangerous I'll start the engine again. This model has a kickstarter so it's on full power in 2secs."

She seemed irritated. Her attitude changed a little from before.

Sophie looked out of the cockpit.

"In my defence, I did warn you."

"Yes but we didn't know this would be the result." Julia replied.

She looked a little nauseous.

"Julia, please don't vomit in here. That would be a pity."

"I will vomit on your head."

"You guys okay?" The panda asked in an attempt to socialize.

Sophie looked concerned on the radar. A little red dot started to come closer on rapid speed. When she finally realized what it was, she restarted the aircraft.

A rocket flew right past us.

"What was that?" Cora noticed. She had been quiet the whole time, but even now she seemed nervous.

"They have seen us. I will drop you guys on a building as fast as I can." Sophie replied.

"Bring us to solid ground. Then we can take cover."

"No, then you will be dead before I could lift off. You will have to jump." Sophie insisted.

"Common!"

"Oh for fucks sake."

I take the parachute. I take a last look to the cockpit.

"Soph-

"GO!"

My mind insisted me on staying and almost nailed my feet to the steel floor. Against my better judgement I took a deep breath and let myself fall out. The moment my feet left the helicopter my heart was pumping insanely fast. My mind was secretly stressing out while the passing air deafened me.

Sophie prepared herself to face the source of the rocket. She hoped that by now everyone was out.

Out of nowhere, even too fast for her to notice on the radar, 3 rockets rushed up and pierced themselves into the helicopter.

"Sophie! Oh fuck no!" I shouted in impulse.

I landed on a high building, one of the few unharmed ones I could see. When I turned around I watched as the fireball devoured the steel of the helicopter. The flames slowly consuming the sides while the vessel was falling down to the earth. I was looking for a flaming body to fall out, but couldn't detect one.

Before I was recovered from this three robots surrounded me.

Their designs were different from each other. But most of them are differently build and designed. I had seen a lot of them, and almost every single one was unique. It was very impressive that you could make so many different ones. Or make a program that makes them so for that matter.

"HEADS DOWN"

The panda landed on top of one robot and with the two shotguns their heads were blown off.

"We have a mission. Let's get started."

I look around. The more I see only destroyed buildings, the more I start to stress.

"Have you seen the others?" I asked, trying to keep my voice stable.

When I got a negative response from the panda I got more worried. I rapidly grabbed the communicator with slightly shaking hands.

"JULIA! JULIA ANSWER ME!"

The other side remained silent.

I started panicking until I heard the cracking sound again.

"Don't worry Chris... I'm ....alright."

My ear twitched by the sound of my forename. She never used it.

"Julia, where are you? Do you have Cora with you?"

"I have her here. She is a bit hurt on her hip, but it's not that bad."

"I'll see you guys at the main square. You'll find it. Wait for us there."

"I think you'd need to wait for us. Anyhow, we'll be there." The other side replied.

*Meanwhile, unknown location*

The little screen turned on.

In vague digits on the cracked screen the words

'Lucifer activated'

His eyes open, and showed the mechanic room through the red lenses.

"Project 22367, I awoke you. This world is destroyed. The impurity banished from effectiveness. Now we picked up a new signal. A spreading of the disease. Cleanse it. After that. Keep guarding this metropol."

"Panda. Don't wonder off alone. Stay with the group. We don't have anything on you when you are pumped full with lead."

I got an irritated but agreeing growl in return.

We moved towards the square walking and jumping on the demolished buildings. Most of them were flats. We came to a big street, and the signal I appointed grew stronger.