

IN A WORLD WITH TWO SPECIES OF HUMANS,  
THREE VICTIMS, EACH WITH BODY PARTS MISSING



**BODY  
HARVEST**

FROM THE OUTER REACHES ...

**MALCOLM ROSE**

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Body Harvest  
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# **BODY HARVEST**

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# THE OUTER REACHES

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*A world inhabited by two distinct and non-interbreeding humanoid species: **majors** (the majority) and **outers**. The two races are outwardly similar, but they have different talents, different genetics and different body chemistry.*

*In this world, meet major Troy Goodhart and outer Lexi Iona Four. They form an amazing crime-fighting partnership.*



# SCENE 1

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*Monday 7th April, Early afternoon*

Using a small plastic spoon, Lexi scooped up live maggots from what had once been a moist mouth. Tipping the wriggling specimens carefully into a jar of alcohol, she muttered, 'This is tricky.'

Troy turned up his nose at the dead body that had become a feast for maggots. 'It's not very nice, is it?'

Surprised, Lexi looked up at her new partner. 'I mean the opposite. Imagine how you'd feel if he was smeared all over with ... What's the best food you've ever tasted?'

Troy frowned. 'Er ... I don't know. Chocolate, I suppose.'

'Well, imagine he's covered in chocolate.'

'What?'

'He's making me really hungry,' Lexi said. 'Outers love maggots. Really yummy.'

Troy was a major, not an outer. He pulled a face.

Clearly in a teasing mood, Lexi added, 'At least we keep the fly population down.'

'Weird,' said Troy.

'You majors are weird to us.'

Shaking his head, Troy replied, 'Please don't eat the evidence.'

The man's corpse was lying in a shallow earthy grave which had been uncovered by a foraging fox or other woodland creature. To the side was the brushwood that someone had used to disguise the disturbed ground.

Still kneeling on the damp soil, Lexi sniffed the specimen jar and then sealed it with a sigh. 'Ah, the smell of alcohol as well.'

'Don't drink the evidence either.'

Lexi smiled. 'What did you say your name was?'

'Troy Goodhart. And you?'

'Lexi.'

'Lexi what?'

‘Lexi Iona Four. I’m the fourth one.’

Troy nodded. Outers had an odd way of naming their children. As well as odd tastes in food and drink.

He looked around the clearing in the wood. Dense lines of trees shielded the spot from the quiet lane behind Troy and Langhorn Reservoir at the bottom of the slope. It was a good place to dispose of a victim. If the culprit had buried the body a little deeper, it might never have been found. Whoever had tried to cover up this particular crime must have thought that a shallow covering of earth and brushwood was enough in such an isolated place.

Lexi checked that her data logger was working and stabbed it into the ground next to the body. Every twenty minutes it would measure and record the temperature. Once it had collected the readings for a 24-hour period, she would be able to work out the time since death. Dating the development of the maggots would also help to calculate how long the body had been lying in the clearing.

Troy didn’t crouch beside Lexi and the victim. He looked down at the injury to the chest, visible through the open shirt, and said, ‘Do you know what killed him? Is it as obvious as it looks?’

Lexi shrugged. ‘The pathologist will find out for sure. I can’t tell with his clothes on and all this soil.

But ... ' She pointed to the gash directly above his heart. 'This would have finished him off, I guess.'

There was another bloodstain lower down, on his right-hand side, and possibly others. Lexi and Troy couldn't see without moving, stripping and washing the body. That wasn't their responsibility.

'No sign of a weapon,' Troy said. It was part-question, part-observation.

'I'll get a search team onto it.'

'Is he a major or an outer?' Troy asked.

Without touching the man's hands, Lexi inspected the decaying fingertips. 'Looks like an outer,' she replied. 'His DNA and the juices seeping into the soil will confirm it. I've bagged samples of decomposing fluids already.'

The stench was awful. With his superior eyesight, Troy surveyed the area as he raised the usual questions. 'Who is he?'

'No ID in his pockets,' Lexi answered. 'No mobile. They'll rummage around much more in the lab but, as far as I can see, he's got nothing on him. Not even a watch or wallet.'

'Someone's trying to stop us identifying him by taking his stuff away, or he just didn't have anything. That'd probably make him one of the displaced.'

'Maybe. Under all this earth, his clothes are pretty

manky, I think,' said Lexi. 'Straggly hair and beard as well. I'm just going to clear the rest of the maggots away so I can get a photo of his face.'

'Was he killed here?'

'Unlikely,' Lexi said. 'Not enough blood in the soil.'

'So, there's a crime scene somewhere else. And his body was probably brought here in a car – which means there'll be traces of him in it.'

'Almost certainly.'

Troy glanced back towards the road. 'You'd have to be built like a lorry to carry him from the road on your own. Maybe it was two people – or one with a wheelbarrow or something.'

'Maybe. The team'll look for footprints and tracks.'

Troy and Lexi were both wearing smooth slip-ons over their shoes so that they didn't leave any impressions on the ground.

'How long's he been here?'

'That's what the insect life will tell me, but I need more data to be accurate. These,' Lexi said, indicating the moving mass of maggots, 'are from blowflies, so he's been here more than a day. They're not very big and there aren't any pupae – you know, when the casing goes hard before the flies pop out – so it's been less than ten days.'

‘Who called us in?’

‘A woman who was collecting logs for her wood-burner,’ Lexi replied.

‘She got more than she bargained for, then. Must have been a shock.’

‘Yeah.’ Lexi made sure all of the samples were stored safely in her holdall and then stood up. ‘I’m done. I’ll let the lab people take over.’ She made for the road.

‘Careful,’ Troy said. ‘Don’t trample all over the place.’

Puzzled, Lexi halted. ‘What do you mean?’

‘This is a perfect place for getting rid of bodies, isn’t it?’

The large, rectangular clearing consisted of bare soil near to the trees, but grass and wild flowers had taken over the centre. It was early April, sunnier than normal, and bluebells were beginning to colour the edges of the space while white and yellow petals flecked the middle.

‘I suppose.’

‘Look,’ Troy said, pointing towards two patches of turf that were a slightly lighter colour than the rest, with fewer wild flowers.

‘Younger growth,’ Lexi suggested.

‘Why are they like that?’

Lexi shrugged again.

‘You call in the lab guys,’ Troy said, clutching his life-logger. ‘I’m going to ask for ground-penetrating radar. And sniffer dogs.’

Lexi stared at him, surprised at his attention to detail. ‘You think someone’s been digging more graves.’

‘Just a feeling.’

Carefully, they picked their way back up the slope to the rarely used lane. The two young detectives were the same age as each other and the same height. They were both fit and somewhat shorter than average. Lexi looked wiry and fast. Troy was sturdier, probably slower, but more powerful. Without a close look, it was difficult to tell which one of them was the major and which was the outer. Externally, the two human species were similar. Internally, though, the body chemistry of a major was very different from that of an outer.

Troy had bright red hair. On his cheeks and chin were the first signs of ginger stubble. A faint moustache was making its appearance above his lip. His bright eyes – a penetrating blue – suggested that he had great powers of observation.

Lexi’s hair was cut short, revealing an attractive face with a steely expression of determination. She wore no make-up on her bronzed skin. Her striking

hair colour – somewhere between blonde and silver – made her look older than her sixteen years. Like any outer, her fingertips were smooth and did not leave prints on anything she touched.

‘Is this your first case?’ she asked Troy.

‘Is it that obvious?’

A faint smile was her reply.

Troy gazed at her and said, ‘What happened to your last partner?’

‘We didn’t get on.’

‘Oh. What’s wrong with you?’ He grinned to show that he was joking.

‘Nothing. It was her. To be honest, I didn’t think she was ... clever enough.’

‘All outers say they’re north of majors when it comes to cleverness.’

‘That’s because we are. No doubt about it. It’s been measured scientifically. But this particular major held me back.’

Troy admitted, ‘I’m not clever either. Not really.’

‘What are you, then? You must have something special to become a detective.’

‘My reports always said I was perceptive. I didn’t know what it meant at first. I had to look it up.’

Lexi nodded. ‘That’ll do. I can work with perceptive. Me, I was always called methodical.’

‘Sounds boring.’

‘I like following procedures,’ she replied. ‘It gets results.’

‘Do you *always* get results?’

‘With the right partner, yes.’

Emerging from the last line of trees and ducking under the police tape, they stopped beside the road and removed their slip-ons. Troy turned towards Lexi and said, ‘I don’t think I’ll hold you back.’

She looked him up and down. ‘We’ll see.’

There were two uniformed officers on duty, guarding the crime scene. ‘We’ve finished for now,’ Lexi told them. ‘There are teams on their way, though. More tests and searches, and a body to take to the pathologist. Maybe more digging as well. We don’t have to be here while they do it but you’re stuck, I’m afraid.’

‘Hope you’ve got toothbrushes and a change of clothes,’ Troy added. ‘We’ll be back if anything else turns up.’

Every detective carried a life-logger. Lexi and Troy each had one of the small mobile devices and it stored every aspect of their working lives. It recorded everything they did, everywhere they went, and everything they saw, heard and said. It provided the evidence in any later trial and ensured that the

investigation had been conducted correctly. Lexi's and Troy's life-loggers had already sent their requirements to the coming teams.

The two teenage detectives had come separately to the crime scene, but they were leaving together. Lexi secured her precious holdall in the boot of the police car and then they both got in. Talking to the onboard computer, Lexi said, 'Shepford Crime Central.' As the car accelerated, they knew that they were about to spend a lot of time in each other's company. If they worked well together, they would form a partnership and tackle many more cases.



Malcolm Rose is an established, award-winning author, noted for his gripping crime/thriller stories – all with a solid scientific basis.

Before becoming a full-time writer, Malcolm was a university lecturer and researcher in chemistry.

He says that chemistry and writing are not so different. *'In one life, I mix chemicals, stew them for a while and observe the reaction. In the other, I mix characters, stir in a bit of conflict and, again, observe the outcome.'*