

EXCERPT from pages 4 and 5 of
THE DIABOLICAL RABBIT by Pete Nicholls

"What are you bloody doing?" my boss asked, under his breath.

"The transcript! The speech!" I whispered back, pointing at the guy talking.

Surprisingly enough, he smiled and thanked me. He turned back to the speech and as I managed to turn myself around (while still crouching) to take my first step toward the aisle, I felt my boss' firm hand on my shoulder. I looked back at him and saw him staring very intensely at something toward the front of the hall. I craned my head around the delegate next to him in order to see what he was looking at. That's when I saw him.

The rabbit.

Well, he wasn't a rabbit, really. That's just the closest thing I think that you could compare him to. He's got the long ears--like a jackrabbit's really--they stuck straight back. He also has the cute, white furry face and the somewhat creepy, red eyes, but other than that, he was human. Well, as far as I could tell. I can totally understand why the press has gotten so comfy with the idea of calling him simply "the rabbit."

He was dressed in a black and dirty-yellow jumpsuit with a brown jacket on. It kind of looked like a WWII bomber jacket, but that's obviously not what it was. It had some gadgets and wiring in various places on the outside of it which made it look less like a WWII bomber jacket now that I think about it.

I glanced over to the doorway and saw my friend the marine and a friend of his moving after the rabbit who was mere feet from the president.

For his part, the American leader had only noticed the rabbit-headed fellow moments earlier.

"Hey, would you--heh-heh, you know Halloween was yesterday," he said.

Before the marines could get to him the rabbit reached the president and shoved him from the podium.

"Shut up," he said, turning to the audience. It wasn't a particularly rude "shut up" but was more like a command.

Marines seemed to appear from every dark corner of the big hall. Each one had some sort of weapon drawn and aimed at our visitor. Yet, their target looked to be completely unarmed.

Then the rabbit did something that was totally unexpected.

He smiled... and then he spoke.

"People of Earth, there is a grave threat on its way to you and I... I am here to save you."

"Remove this guy!" the president yelled pointing at the Rabbit. The marines moved in closer as my friend stepped toward the rabbit and reached for his arm.

"Don't do it," the rabbit said with incredible seriousness.

"Get this asshole out of here!" the president yelled. My marine friend continued and took the rabbit by his right elbow. Suddenly he froze--my friend, not the rabbit. Slowly his fingers pulled away from the rabbit's limb, digit-by-digit until my friend was left standing there, still motionless, like a statue, with his hand flat and palm facing our visitor.

"Shoot him!" Yep, it was the president again. The marines all pulled their triggers causing several metallic clicking sounds to echo around the hall.

"Do I need to say it?" the rabbit asked.

"Say what? Someone get me something that will kill this idiot!" the president said, looking out at us. My boss grumbled something under his breath.

"You ridiculous humans," the rabbit said, "Fine, I'll say it."

The rabbit then hunched his shoulders up, bore his sharp teeth and then held his hands over his head, looking pretty damn threatening, actually. "YOUR WEAPONS ARE USELESS AGAINST ME!"

The room was tense with fear and awkwardness. I looked around and could see all of the Earth's "great" leaders looking pretty damn scared. Some wide-eyed, others slack-jawed, still others looked like they were going to be sick on the spot. In all honesty, the rabbit made me want to pee myself. There was just something about his presence. He just had one of those faces, I guess...