The Burrow Begins

B Alan Bourgeois · Opening excerpt · 1 of 2

The fluorescent hum of old lights buzzed faintly overhead as Rowan leaned over a makeshift desk in the tunnel’s heart. Dual monitors cast fractured light across their focused face, illuminating the fine sweat on their brow. The cursor blinked, blinking like a pulse in a dying body. A grim rhythm.

They hadn’t slept in twenty-nine hours.

Lines of encrypted code flowed across the screens, forming a digital lattice that only Rowan could navigate. They’d been tracing reports of missing community shelters, off-grid data blackouts, and unusual federal courier activity in red states. It all pointed to one conclusion—people were vanishing. Again.

Rowan paused. A corrupted subfile just decoded itself. They took a breath and opened it.

"Directive 88: Phase 2 Authorized. Subjected Groups: Class Q, T, I. Execute via silent transfer protocols. Collateral loss permitted. Status: Active."

They froze.

A message pinged their secure channel. It was from Wes: "Another safehouse dark. San Antonio. Can’t raise them."

Rowan stared at the screen, fingers trembling. "It’s happening."

They toggled on the tunnel intercom, their voice tight: “Wake up. We’ve lost another one.”

# # #

Reading sample — continued

Within twenty minutes, the old subway tunnel was alive with movement. Pipes groaned under the shifting weight of bodies. A rusted spool table in the center acted as a command post. Around it stood ten figures—refugees, survivors, warriors-in-waiting.

Cam, ex-Marine and protector, leaned forward, his fingers drumming against the table’s chipped wood. “Three safehouses in a month? That's not an accident.”

“It’s a purge,” said Toni, her voice low but strong. She stood tall, dark curls tucked under a faded cap, arms crossed in defiance. “They’ve legalized the next holocaust. And no one’s saying a word.”

Eli, barely seventeen, still flinched at every sound. His voice cracked. “They took my best friend last week. He missed a Zoom class, and the next day, he was gone. No one remembers him anymore. Like he never existed.”

Noelle knelt beside him, rubbing his back gently. “They’re pumping dissociates into those kids. Wiping names, memories. This isn’t conversion therapy—it’s chemical cleansing.”

Mira dropped a thermal photo onto the table. “Taken from a drone we hijacked last week. That’s not a wellness center. That’s a containment zone. Cells. Detainment tech. High-security medical units.”