



# Equations of Life

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**Equations of Life** Simon Morden

*Winner of the 2012 Philip K. Dick Award*

Samuil Petrovitch is a survivor.

He survived the nuclear fallout in St. Petersburg and hid in the London Metrozone – the last city in England. He's lived this long because he's a man of rules and logic.

For example, getting involved = a bad idea.

But when he stumbles into a kidnapping in progress, he acts without even thinking. Before he can stop himself, he's saved the daughter of the most dangerous man in London.

And clearly saving the girl = getting involved.

Now, the equation of Petrovitch's life is looking increasingly complex.

Russian mobsters + Yakuza + something called the New Machine Jihad = one dead Petrovitch.

But Petrovitch has a plan – he always has a plan – he's just not sure it's a good one.

## Equations of Life Details


Date : Published April 1st 2011 by Orbit (first published 2011)

ISBN : 9780316125185

Author : Simon Morden

Format : Paperback 400 pages

Genre : Science Fiction, Fiction, Cyberpunk, Dystopia, Apocalyptic, Post Apocalyptic

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## Papatya ?ENOL says

farklı türlerde okuma yaparken bilimkurguyu es geçmek olmaz dedim ve "yaşamın denklemleri"ne denk geldim. heralde bir yerde övülmüştü, hatırlamıyorum ama ben petrovich'in maceralarından oluşan serinin ilk kitabını yorgunlukla bitirdim diyebilirim. çok aksiyon dolu ve inandırıcıktan uzaktı. karakterler tam oturmadı; çünkü olaylar o kadar hızlı geliyordu ki kahramanlar dahil kimsenin durup düşünmeye vakti yoktu.

denedim, sevmedim.

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## Denise says

Well that was just too much fun! Quantum AI, Russian and Japanese crime loads, nuns with guns! While that may sound ridiculous it was actually a good story where the hero has a pacemaker and embedded defibrillator and dies more times than I can count. He's not strong, he's smart. Looking forward to the sequel.

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## Ashryn says

A post-apocalyptic journey of self-redemption and bildungsroman. Probably aimed at millennials who develop intellectually at the expense of interpersonal relationships; thanks to a steady diet of technologically assisted personal interactions and freely available information. It explores the divide between the physical and the virtual and draws parallels using physics and artificial intelligence. It is an intelligent novel that does not try to instruct or lecture the reader.

It took a tiny bit of getting used to the Russian swearing in this one; mainly because I don't speak Russian and so I never knew what flavour of expletive was being used. Since the Russian turn of phrase is rather interesting, it would have been good to have a translation somewhere for language geeks too lazy to google it. There are plenty of nods to memes and cult icons that draw the reader into a relationship with Petrovich by creating a bridge of shared experience.

I love the world this novel and the following two, are set in (London - Called Metrozone after the 'apocalypse' the details of which are not really important to the story except that it involved radiation). I love the fierceness and vulnerability of the main character, though I had a bit of trouble believing Petrovich's age, given his educational quals, health limitations and employment history. When I eventually made peace with the idea, it was much easier to enjoy the story and the relationships between characters.

It can be read purely for entertainment, and it succeeds in this sense; it is difficult to put down after the first 100 pages, and I was compelled to immediately buy the next two books as soon as I finished the first. Scratch the surface and there is plenty of social commentary and philosophical content packed within the subtext and for those interested in such things, Morden has shown himself to be an astute observer of social change.

I found that the second and third books in this series were more enjoyable, but I'm not sure if it is a case of practice makes perfect on behalf of the reader or the writer.

## **L says**

This book is such a--dare I say it?--charming departure from what I've been seeing in sci fi! Had to give it the 5 stars. It's post-Armageddon "London Metrozone." Ok, I know what you're thinking. "Charming" and "post-Armageddon" together? Has she taken leave of her senses? But I have to call it as I see it. (And, yes, probably millions of people die in this one, along the way. But the story isn't really about those people, though they do factor in, of course.)

You've got your Russian organized crime. You've got your Japanese organized crime. You've got your local dispossessed mob (less organized crime). You've got a 2+ meter tall, incredibly strong nun, carrying her Vatican-approved gun, so she can protect her parish priest. And then there are the cops and, of course, the New Machine Jihad. Samuil Petrovitch, who survived Armageddon (which is never actually explained), somehow finds himself caught up in all of this because he broke his rule and got involved. It is quite an adventure, for all concerned.

The key characters are all well-drawn, including the crime bosses, the nun, and, of course, Petrovitch. I really had trouble putting this one down. Can't say more without spoiling things. You'll just have to read it.

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## **Greg Fortier says**

I was first attracted to this series by the covers alone. Then I started reading them.

The hero of the stories, Sam Petrovich, is the unlikeliest of leading men and yet he turns into a futuristic Super Hero by simply thinking three steps ahead and accessing the information. Don't understand me too quickly. This is not a DC or Marvel Super Hero we are talking about. He is just someone who is fighting for his life and his way of life and eventually for those he cares about and is willing to do anything to get there. Imagine Batman but with less morals and eventually, through the series, better gadgets without the cape and mask.

It's fast action and humorous and the books move so quickly you will find yourself through all four books in the series and waiting like I am to see what happens next.

One word of advice, keep this website tagged on your computer or your phone when you are reading.

<http://www.myinsults.com/support-us/1...>

Samuel Petrovich loves to swear in Russian and he does it so often I found myself going back and forth sometimes while reading the first book, just so I could follow the context and to understand how mad or frustrated he really was. I really enjoyed the research and after a while you get the gist of what he's saying without referring to the website, but it's still fun to read the literal translations.

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## **Bradley says**

There's a lot of good things I can say about this novel. It has good plot, good pacing, and it does the whole subgenre of techno-thriller justice.

I enjoyed the main character, Petrovich, for his almost unbelievable mash up of personality traits. I mean,

who else except in a techno-thriller will be a hardened survivor of an apocalypse, a computer geek, an untrained but very well read and brilliant mathematician, and a self-serving asshole with combat skills? Oh. Wait... something like this does happen fairly often, or at least close variations on the theme.

I'm not complaining. It's entertaining for what it is.

It's a very easy read compared to a lot of the books I've read recently, and it passed very smoothly down my gullet, like vodka and sake. (But not at the same time!)

It is kinda funny, though, that I'd be reading no less than a half-dozen novels this year with AIs. Hell, earlier this month, I just read *The Hive Construct*, which was almost the very twin to this novel, at least in broad plot and action. It's almost as if a one page synopsis was shared between publishers or the underlying zeitgeist of throwing yourself at crazy AI's is so firmly embedded in our collective psyche (Thank you, 2001 *Space Odyssey*) that we've just got to rehash the same theme a million times, and preferably in cities where we can have the most collateral damage.

Though, to be fair, I much preferred the writing and the characters in this novel over the other one I just mentioned. It's also worth mentioning this one came out years before, as well. I'll soon get into this one's sequels. I liked it. It's a popcorn SF adventure, done all modern-like.

And who knows, maybe I'll get a taste of how the world will be after the GUT starts getting some applications. :) I'd love to see some speculation up here! ;)

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## Alexandra says

Awesome world - post-some sort of an Apocalypse that's kept pretty vague in this novel, although there are references to nuclear fallout and radiation issues. The story takes place in a London that's had all of its parks converted into refugee camps, basically, filled with shipping containers turned into living quarters. The world is technologically-speaking not that far from our own - possibly because the Apocalypse came along and halted development for a number of years, I guess. There are hints that other things have changed, too, my favourite being one of the characters, a nun who identifies as a Joan. Yes, she carries weapons. That's pretty awesome. I can appreciate military nuns. There are also mafia, yakuza, physics doctoral students, weary cops....

Tragically, the story and the characters do not live up to the setting they are given. The story, of the repercussions when a student in the wrong place at the wrong time decides to act the hero, has great potential. How organised crime might work in such a world is a fascinating topic, especially when you add in the option of new and exciting technology and the clash of old and new morals and values. However, this one did not work well for me primarily because it chopped and changed too many times. I don't mind surprises, but they have to make sense in the context of the characters, rather than feeling like the next thing to be dumped on the reader because the plot was slowing down some.

The characters also let the story down. Petrovich, the main protag, is dull and whingy. So is Luke Skywalker for all of Episode IV. Luke though has the advantage of awesome supporting characters. Petrovich has Maddy, the nun; she started off well and just went downhill in terms of attitude and believability. There's the tired cop, probably the most amusing and realistic of the bunch, who gets little screen time, and the PhD student with whom Petrovich shares an office, who again had potential but barely has the dialogue to become a cameo let along anything else.

So. Disappointed? yes. Likely to read the next two in the series? No.

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## Weston Ochse says

Okay. I gotta say, the cover hooked me. I mean, come on. If it doesn't hypnotize you, then it'll leave you quivering on the ground in a seizure. I found myself traveling without a book to read. I can't take two steps without a book on call, so I popped into a local Barnes and Nobles, scoured the shelves and BANG!

Then I opened it. I'm not sure what to call it. Post-apocalyptic cyberpunk? Apocalyptic Punk? Whatever you call it, Equations of Life is a terrific entry book into the world of Simon Morden. Reading the acknowledgements and the interview afterwards, I see our mutual friend Brian Hopkins (BaH) had something to do with Simon's success in his early days. That Simon has written so extensively in this universe rings clear and presents an authentic, texturally rich and wholly believable landscape.

I thoroughly enjoyed the book and finished it within 24 hours. I'm signing books at another Barnes and Nobles today and plan on getting the next two, which I believe have equally seizure-enticing covers.

Terrific Job, Mr. Morden.

Keep them coming.

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## Justin says

<http://staffersmusings.blogspot.com/2...>

The moment I saw the cover for Simon Morden's **Equations of Life** I was intrigued. In a genre known for covers like S.M. Stirling's **Rising**(google it, right now), the art put together by Orbit Books screamed unique. I have to give them credit for giving a new author something that differentiates him on the shelf. Throw in a blurb that has Armageddon, jihads, and complex math and there was little doubt I was pumped to get my hands on it.

Morden's novel features a fairly standard protagonist named Samuil Petrovich - he's begrudgingly heroic and decidedly irreverent in the face of danger. He's also an advanced theoretical mathematician who suffers from a degenerative heart condition. On his way to the university, Petrovich witnesses an attempted kidnapping of a young girl. Despite his best interests he intervenes, saving her from abduction.

Along the way he gets a hand from Maddy, a gun toting amazonian nun, who helps him return the rescued girl to her father - who just so happens to be the head of the Oshicora crime family (read Yazuka). Caught between the Russian mob, the Oshicoras, the police, a couple of street gangs, and a mysterious entity calling itself the New Machine Jihad, Petrovich finds himself in a high stakes tug and pull for Metrozone's future.

**Equations** wasn't what I expected - at all. The title, the cover art, the blurb all pointed in my mind to something a lot more akin to the film **A Beautiful Mind**. Usually when my preconceived notions are blown apart I tend to be disappointed. With **Equations** that wasn't the case at all. While mathematics only lurked on the periphery of the story and Petrovich turned out to be far more Chow Yun Fat than Rick Moranis, the

book whipped by at such a pace that I never had a moment to lament what it wasn't. Rather, I focused on what is was - a first rate cyberpunk thriller filled with witty dialog and outstanding wizbangs.

Petrovich is the novels primary focus. He's an onion-y character that reveals himself slowly and almost always accompanied by Russian epithets. Who he really is and why he got involved are questions that permeate the early parts and drives things when the action slows down. Unfortunately, the breadth of the story and the pace Morden chose to tell it left little time to explore the novels secondary characters or elaborate on the setting. In particular Petrovich's nun companion, Maddy gets short shrift despite significant page time.

Additionally, there seems to be a bit of a trend developing to start series with narrower plots before expanding into a more epic struggle in the subsequent installments (**Shadow's Son** by Jon Sprunk is a recent one that comes mind immediately). I'd love to talk to someone on the decision making side of the industry at some point to see whether this is a conscious decision. Telling more self contained stories precludes the need for information dumps, but also removes some of the wonder that's the lifeblood of the genre. **Equations** walks a fine line of hinting at the larger world yet staying unencumbered. It's largely successful, but I found myself very much wanting to know more about what's going on outside Merry ol' England.

In all, **Equations of Life** was an excellent first installment in Simon Morden's **Metrozone Series**. While I found the lack of academia disappointing, the fantastic pace and action more than made up for it. I'm sure I'll be diving into **Theories of Flight** and **Degrees of Freedom** soon. And if the ending to **Equations** holds up there is sure to be a bigger dose of theoretical math ahead.

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### **Jenny (Reading Envy) says**

I read this when it was nominated for the Philip K. Dick award in 2012, and I'm glad it showed up on that list as I hadn't come across it in any other way. Technically the entire trilogy is nominated.

This is set in a post-apocalyptic London (in the "Metrozone"), in a time where bombs have destroyed most of the world and countries like Japan have completely disappeared due to environmental disaster (war-related).

Samuil Petrovitch is around 20, having recently escaped from St. Petersburg and working as a graduate physics student, when he helps someone who is being kidnapped. He gets involved in a situation involving Russian mobsters, Yakuza, and ends up with technology going crazy.

The story is fast-paced and has a lot of bits to make my geeky heart happy, including mathematicians who might be cracking the code to time travel in the midst of the chaos, a main character who swears in Russian, a nun who just happens to have the biggest gun of anyone, and a new Japan created in a virtual space. Samuil is written to be complex, but the age of the characters really got to me - Maddy and Sam are both around 20 and I just kept thinking how much more I'd believe their actions and powers of deduction if they were at least in their 30s.

I think I may actually read the next book.

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