

Character B - In hiding

Introduction

Could it really be true, what your friend said the other day? That there's a resistance movement, The Kaukas, that has tinkered with the government's signal and thus causing the death of everyone in the end? You've seen the truth, you know that it's the government's fault to begin with that society collapsed and that people are living a lie, but there *are* individuals trying to make things right again. Like your friend, who works extra for the government; you trust them fully since a long time back and know that they want to do good.

At the same time, their cheerful, unbothered attitude feels like knives twisting in your heart when you know that what they carry home in their grocery bags aren't plastic wrapped taco kits, but shrivelled turnips. That they are scrawny in their tattered clothes, worn from sleeping on broken concrete under roofs that are letting in both cold and rain. And amongst ordinary people, security agents from Vipol are moving in disguise, and you can never be entirely sure about who they are. Not until it's too late. The nanobot updates run more frequently now; you have to perform the update every eight minutes during half the hours of the day in order to keep the signal going. Or in order to keep it from being overrun by another..?

No, this isn't working anymore. You have to protect yourself, you have to vanish from their radar. The hiding place is set up, it has to become your permanent residence from now on. If only you could find The Kaukas or a way to contact them, then maybe you could get help and answers. And you wouldn't be alone. But there's not much time. What are you waiting for? Hide!

Offgame:

Set an alarm, with a stressful/insistent sound, to go off every eight minutes. When the alarm sounds, the character's nanobots need to be updated according to the government's directive, something that's critical to do in order to not be exposed as a threat to the nation. When the alarm sounds, your character has to perform the update manually, by remaining perfectly still and closing their eyes for three seconds. Focus on not thinking about anything other than the update. This alarm signal exists ingame and is a way for your character to keep track of the updates.

Set another alarm (using another sound than the above) for 30 minutes. When this alarm goes off, it's time to end the ongoing scene and read the instructions for the next one. This signal exists only out of game, and is a way for you to finish the scenes after an appropriate amount of time. It's of course quite alright to finish whatever you're currently playing on before ending the scene, if that fits better with your game.

Scene 1

Before the pandemic and the fall of society, quiet days like these used to feel relaxed and nice. Now you're sitting here at wits' end, with your life as a pawn in an arena built by the government and Vipol and not having had any say about it. Everyone you meet are either people who cannot see past the nanobot signals in their brains, or security agents with Vipol. You, of course, never know which. Loneliness tears at you from inside.

A note with a number you don't know lies burning in your mind, demanding your attention. According to the message, which you're pretty sure came from The Kaukas, it's someone you can contact and be safe with. Someone who is like you, who has seen through the government signal as well and who surely is lonely too, A contact who might even be able to help you?

Offgame:

Consider the last thing your character's friend said to them. What did that mean, really? How does the loneliness and exposure in knowing about the government's enslavement of people through implants and false stories feel? And the fact that your character would simply disappear if someone from Vipol found out about this? And how did The Kaukas get wind of your character?

Your character will contact your co-player's character during this scene. It's up to you when that happens, but don't wait longer than a few minutes so that you have time to interact during scene 1.

Start the end-of-scene alarm (every 30 minutes) as well as the update alarm (every eight minutes) now. It's time to start playing!

Scene 2

What you've been able to glean from obscure messageboards, scribbled graffiti and internet rumours, is that The Kaukas has gathering nodes at some locations throughout the country. If you're not mistaken, one such node is not far from your current position. Maybe you would dare approach it, in order to get answers? It's a risk, but it *is* about life and death, after all.

You don't know your new contact very well yet. It could be valuable to try to establish a relationship and/or get to know more about them. It's probably a welcome thing to have a friend in such an exposed situation as the one you're in, if you can trust them of course?

Offgame:

Decide whether you'd like a node location nearby or if you want an undefined location far away to move towards. Start planning for how your character will get there and how it will keep safe. You don't have to leave your current location during the larp, this is only about preparations for leaving the character's hiding place.

Scene 3

Hurry!!! They may have found you, they're close to your hiding place! Vipol? Or The Kaukas? You don't know, but the sinister feeling is quite pervasive. You can almost hear the hum of their drones, their footsteps that are more hurried than those of people nearby, their voices rising when they think they've found you... You have to get as good as invisible right now!

Offgame:

Stay as silent and hidden as you can, either for as long as you can manage or until the next update alarm (8 minutes). Even if your character can't see the agents, they can see your characters through their drones, hidden surveillance cameras or even through paid helpers who look just like anyone out there. Danger is palpable.

Your character may of course still communicate with your co-player's character, but maybe they need to whisper, write briefly and quietly, or in other ways modify the ways of communication?

Once you feel that you've been hiding long enough, you don't have to continue being as quiet and hidden any longer. Still, it's recommended that you keep the feeling of being under surveillance and in danger from police and authorities or a rebel movement.

Scene 4

Hasn't it been more than eight minutes now? It has to have been, you could count that interval in your sleep by now! But no signal to update has come, and you've been getting an increasing headache that just seems to grow worse. Until it suddenly evaporates, a moment later. Instead you're starting to drop things you're holding or hit things around you. The typos in your messages become more frequent. Memory seems fickle. It's as if your mental barriers are being slowly lowered, and your capacity for taking in your surroundings gets worse. Is it even your new friend causing this?

Somewhere deep down you realize that this isn't normal. That this isn't you, but something else causing you to behave this way. But before you've followed that thought to the end, you've forgotten where it started and instead have to parry another stumble into something or drop what you're holding.

Offgame:

Turn off the eight minutes alarm (the update alarm) prior to scene start. The government's signal can no longer keep The Kaukas' virus at bay, causing the nanobots to crawl further into the brain where they start damaging the centers for motor skills and memory (your character doesn't know this, but can probably figure it out during the scene). This is going to lead to the death of your character. Desperation becomes unfettered; what else can your character do to save themselves? What does your co-player's character actually know?

Feel free to act out the different behaviours mentioned above, but remember to do it in a safe way that doesn't affect non-larping people around you.

Scene 5

Another message arrives from an empty sender, but this time it seems to be not from The Kaukas, but from the government:

“Thank you for your cooperation for a controlled world. Unfortunately it ends here, unless you assist us once more. Give up your contact and their location, and we can save your life. Hurry, our drones show that you don’t have long.”

Your symptoms have increased, and apart from finding it harder to move as well as breathe, you’re having trouble remembering who you are or where you’re going. Who’s the contact you’re supposed to give up, again? Perhaps it’s another fantasy, just like all those unsorted images popping up in your mind, showing people and places you thought you knew from before?

Offgame:

Change the end-of-scene alarm from 30 minutes to 20 minutes. This is the last scene, and you can either choose to let your character continue planning to leave, or let that go and remain where they are. Allow the symptoms to show in the interaction with your co-player, through confusion or strong sadness/love/joy/etc. Feel free to act out the different behaviours, but remember to do it in a safe way that doesn’t affect non-larping people around you.

It’s up to you whether your character gives your co-player’s character up or not. You decide if your character tells your co-player’s character about this or not. You also decide whether your character dies before the end-of-scene alarm (20 minutes) sounds, or if they survive even longer than that. Perhaps there are a few moments of clarity before it’s over?

Finish

Offgame:

You’re no longer ingame. Take a moment together with your co-player and tell each other what happened to your characters. If you wish, you can decide together what happened to society, to The Kaukas and to others like your characters, who withstood the government’s false signals but were struck with The Kaukas’ virus.

Remember to thank each other for what you’ve experienced during play!

One last comment: The symptoms your characters showed at the end of the larp, came from the nanobots moving further into the characters’ brains and causing aggregations there, which destroyed the functions of the brains. Offgame, the symptoms you acted on are real life descriptions of how people with neurodegenerative diseases are affected. Common for brain diseases like for example Alzheimer’s and Parkinson’s diseases, ALS and frontotemporal dementia, are decreasing functionality in cognition, memory and motor skills the further damaged the brain gets. In cases of frontotemporal dementia, this can also present as strongly expressed emotional behaviour. A person afflicted with any of the aforementioned diseases will die prematurely. Science has not yet figured out exactly how the diseases spread in the brain, and there is as of yet no cure.