

*“Everything is not okay. No matter what the government wants us to believe. I’ve seen the truth, I know what they want to hide. The question is whether it matters or not. Soon, there’ll be no one left anyway. But I don’t want to end up like them.”*

The Great Pandemic swept across the world in the year of 2000, and swiftly grabbed hold of humanity. Society shut down and all efforts turned to stopping the contagion while saving as many people as possible. A year of rules and restrictions followed, upheld by good citizens and by the newly instated police department; Vipol (Virus police). After a huge vaccination effort, the disease was deemed eradicated at last. Society could go back to normal.

At least that’s what the official story says, and what the majority of people know. For you and a few others, the truth shines through during brief moments, when the government’s signal loses hold of your brain...

The Great Pandemic came and society was shut down, but not in a peaceful way. Desperation for necessities and the so very critical vaccine, which in the beginning fell far short of being enough for everyone, led to steadily increasing violence and vandalism. Might made right. A small group of governing politicians had, foreseeingly enough, closed themselves into a bunker and planned to take over the country. Together with some scientists, they presented a vaccine that would not only be enough for all, but that also contained nanobots controlled by said government.

The nanobots travelled to the site in the brain where the optic nerve attaches to the visual centre, and replaced the actual visual impressions with a signal from the government. That signal shows a flourishing community just like it was before the pandemic, and the brain then autofills the missing pieces for the other senses. Vipol remains a security unit subordinated only to the government itself, and controls society and its people through all communication media, their drones and agents. The politicians in the bunker now have all the power they wished for, and the majority of the citizens don’t even know what’s happened.

However, there are a select few individuals out there who, thanks to a genetic variation, can sometimes circumvent the nanobot signal. The new government views this as a serious threat, and wants to eliminate all such individuals. There’s no telling who else carries the variation or who is a Vipol agent, which is why vigilance and caution are keys to survival. At the same time, this causes despondency and fear in any person who has to live such a vast lie. It’s almost as if one never got out of the pandemic isolation.

A resistance has risen from the remains of society though; The Kaukas. They’ve recently managed to hack their way into the government’s nanobot signal, and even if they haven’t been able to completely shut it down, they’re at least continually fighting it. This causes the nanobots to have to be cleared and updated regularly in order to keep their functionality. Blind citizens notice nothing about this, of course. Individuals carrying the genetic variation have to do this “manually”, by shutting out as many impressions as possible and focus on the update when it happens. To not go through with the update would give Vipol an immediate flare about you and your location, meaning they could come to eliminate you. Lately, these updates have been happening with increasing frequency, and now one has to update the nanobots every eight minutes during half the hours of the day in order to keep the signal active.