

Character A - In hiding

Introduction

This has gone too far. Soon they'll come for you, you know it. You've seen the way they look at you, people out there, and you feel the pressure build across your chest every time someone gets a little too close. At the same time, their cheerful, unbothered attitudes feel 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. Yet amongst them, security agents from Vipol are moving in disguise, and you can never be entirely sure about who they are. You can guess, but not know. Not until it's too late. And the nanobot updates run more frequently now; you have to perform the update every eight minute during half the hours of the day in order to stay hidden.

No, it's truly gone too far. You have to protect yourself, you have to disappear from their radar. The hiding place is set, it has to become your permanent residence. You've no idea for how long. But maybe it was a sign that your closest friend, shortly before they vanished, whispered to you of The Kaukas, the hacker group promising freedom to all of humanity. Freedom in the form of a virus, sure, but this time not a biological one. You know what it means, that maybe they can put an end to the signal which the government fights to uphold. If everyone woke up, if everyone could see what had truly happened... then you wouldn't be alone anymore. And no longer in danger. If only you could find The Kaukas, or a way to contact them, then maybe you could get help. 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. Loneliness tears at you from inside, vigilance has become a second layer of skin. 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. It's imperative to stay hidden, to not relax for too long in one place, at the same time as you have to act just like any blind citizen in the street.

Offgame:

Consider the last thing your character's friend said to them. What did that mean, really? Did the friend know something more? Can you be sure of them not informing Vipol about your character? Begin the scene by writing a farewell letter to the friend, where your character explains their reality and what most likely happened in case your character disappears.

Your character is going to be contacted by your co-player's character during this scene. How does your character react to getting a contact who seems just as lonely and vigilant, and who may also have seen the truth?

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

You don't have very much to offer your newfound contact, but maybe they can help you? What do they really know about The Kaukas, or about the government signal? Is there any way you can profit from this contact without risking your own life? Sure, you can do some bargaining, information isn't free, but there should be things about your life that you can tell them and still not divulge too much about who you are or where to find you? And at the same time, it could be really valuable to learn things about your new contact, things that can be used later if the need arises...

Offgame:

Your character doesn't know their 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 your character is in?

Scene 3

Hurry!!! There's no doubt about it; Vipol is closing in! 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 turn as good as invisible 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.

Scene 4

When the "new message"-signal sounded, you just expected another text from your new friend. But there was not even a number listed, and the contents...

"We know that you've been in contact with another one like you. They aren't who you think, but we don't want to hurt anyone who's simply misled. In order to save them, you have to get to a designated spot within two hours. Further instructions will follow.
/THE KAUKAS"

You erased the message as soon as you'd read it, with fingers shaking from adrenaline. Direct contact with The Kaukas, how is that possible? But if they managed to hack their way into the government's nanobot network, then your device is hardly a challenge...

Offgame:

Pick a place or a direction to travel towards, according to the message from The Kaukas, if you choose to follow their order. Start planning for how your character will get there, what they need to bring and how it will keep safe. You don't have to leave the spot you're in during the larp, this is just about *preparations* to leave.

You can also choose not to save your co-player's character, and not let your character leave their hiding place at all. You decide how much and what your character tells your co-player's character about this.

Scene 5

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. You notice that you get furious with stuff your newfound friend says or doesn't say, and you normally don't shout at people like you do now, right? It's as if your mental barriers are being slowly lowered, causing your emotions to get more and more exposed.

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.

Another message arrives from an empty sender, something you know means it's from The Kaukas:

"Thank you for your cooperation to free the world. Unfortunately, it ends here. Be glad that you saw the truth after all! We hope that you have time to say goodbye to your closest ones before you meet the end. /THE KAUKAS"

Offgame:

Change the end-of-scene alarm from 30 minutes to 20 minutes. 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, memory and emotions (your character doesn't know this, but can probably figure it out during the scene). The damage affecting the brain 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?

This is the last scene, and you can either choose to let your character continue planning for leaving their safe place, or let that go and remain where they are. Allow the neural degeneration to be noticeable in the interaction with your co-player, through raging fits, confusion or strong sadness/love/joy/other.

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.

You 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.