

# DYSTOPIA

The story takes place in a future in which society has evolved and doesn't need to be based on work anymore. All activities are carried out by convicts, to whom the need to feel emotions and to live in relationship with others are completely negated through genetic modification and nanotechnology. The technological progress has allowed to build this huge workforce at very low costs by means of modifications of the genomic structure and the introduction of a mind-control chip, which "turns off" the individual's consciousness and turns the convict into an automaton. The chip allows the subject only the writing of memories, but not their reading, and it can be viewed only by those who have control of the chip. The power is held by a restricted oligarchy that controls this huge mass of catatonic and enslaved workers. This alienating technology, however, was extended not only to those has been sentenced, but also to anyone who transcend the rigid patterns of behavior imposed by the state, struggling for freedom and individual rights. Anyone who does not abide by the dictates of the elite is excluded from society and "turned off". This grim dystopian reality has many features in common with the "City of God" by St. Augustine. In this case, however, we find a powerful elite that has self-proclaimed its superiority and has arrogated to itself the right to own and live, abusing the rest of society, now reduced to a mass of automatons sentenced to a total alienation not only by their work, but even from themselves and the possibility to enjoy their leisure time.

The story is narrated in first person, and the protagonist (whom is unnamed) is a former researcher who worked on the project of this technology for mind control, and he's the only one aware of the fact that these changes induced by the chip are reversible. It was the only survivor among the researchers of the project, and the state made sure to keep secret the possibility of being able to go back, silencing anyone who was aware of the truth. All the other scientists who had worked with him were in fact eliminated in a mysterious attack.

The co-protagonist is Cleo, a lawyer who defends the convicted persons. She is part of a secret society called the Order of the Black Rose, which deals with finding an alternative solution to the "turning-off process" of human beings. The motivations that drive the Order come from not wanting to accept the approval and the strict division of a society that is becoming increasingly paroxysmal. In this society, in fact, not only those who commit crimes are turned-off, but also those who go outside the box. There's a punitive but non-rehabilitative justice, and justice is used for a political purpose, which aims to build a dystopian society. Her father, Reinhard, is at the head of the secret company, while her mother, her husband and her son were turned off and all their traces are lost.

The secret society knows how to bring back the subjects extinguished by the State, but with the drawback that they are no longer able to establish interpersonal relationships and show an unpredictable and socially inappropriate behavior.

Cleo runs into the protagonist in unclear circumstances, finding him unconscious and taking him to the nearest hospital. Cleo will accept to defend him against society's accusations, who well knows the identity of the protagonist and his role in the development of technologies for mind control, intending to get rid of him, but unable to kill him due to the presence of a lawyer. So the authorities attempt to get rid of this character, that is really dangerous for them, with a false-trial against him, with a lot of false witnesses and manipulated evidences.

Cleo realizes who she's dealing with and therefore decides to tell him the story of the Order of the Black rose. This secret society was formed by people who have unjustly suffered the loss of loved ones and deals, thanks to large sums provided by its wealthy members, to find a way to neutralize the effect of the chip, "turning-on" the convicted ones and to form a coalition against the state to overturn the order.

The State, in the person of the plenipotentiary Julius, tries all the ways to eliminate the protagonist. Julius believes that we can not go back, because the mass of turned-off people has become so great that, if it were "revived", it would become unmanageable. In addition, the state does not want to lose the possibility to erase and manipulate the historical memory of the people at his own will.

When it seems inevitable that the process will lead to the conviction of the protagonist, the Order of the Black Rose decides to proceed with the operation of re-humanization, which consists in turning on all the doomed controlled by the chip, despite the obvious flaws of the temporary care.

The secret society is convinced that the protagonist will be able to treat the awakened ones in the grip of abnormal behavior, but he's not. The protagonist tries to dissuade Reinhard since, according to him, it's wrong to subvert an established order, as brutal and unfair it may be, to plunge the whole society in an even worse state of chaos and violence.

Cleo also opposes, because she knows that if such a weapon would be used all their loved ones would be exposed to suffer and commit unspeakable violence.

Despite the disagreement of the two, Reinhard, in the throes of a revolutionary madness, decided to start the operation.

Cleo and our protagonist evade and reach the headquarters of the secret society to stop it, but it was too late and the chaos is already rampant in the streets.

Reinhard, now pervaded by a delirium of omnipotence, blows up the headquarters of his company and Cleo and the protagonist, who had just arrived on the spot, lose consciousness.

Once woke up they realize that Julius has captured and taken them to a fortress, where they're protected from disorders that are raging.

Here takes place a heated argument between the protagonist, Julius and Cleo. The protagonist explains that the initial reasons for which this technology was created are to be sought in an attempt to re-educate those people who, even though they had committed serious wrongs in society, need to rebuild their lives after a conviction. It was just a sort of right to oblivion, a chance to start anew without the weight of an oppressive past.

Julius would argue that the technology to turn off consciousness has been the greatest discovery of mankind, as it has enabled man to be free from the slavery of work, delegate to beings who have already lost their humanity, siding or committing crimes against society.

Cleo contends that this choice has led to the absurd situation in which who turns off and who is turned off are both guilty, because everyone has forgotten the purpose of living in a society: the progress. On one hand we have turned-off beings, unable to create if not following the orders of a machine and unable to enjoy the fruits of their labor, on the other an opulent society, closed in itself and strained to extinction because of the internal "rat race".

During this conversation, the fortress was stormed by Reinhard, which reveals an unexpected fact: being secretly entered into possession of the care developed by the main character, he's now intentioned to build an army of fanatics, which is determined to recreate a world without feelings and without free thought. He argues that it is better to start a war to stop all wars, where the result is the suppression of human conflicts, making

sure that everyone is artificially forced to align themselves with those who control the technology to manipulate the mind. Reinhard in pain for having seen almost all his loved ones reduced as puppets, has become insensitive to the uniqueness of the human being. Cleo and the protagonist then try to reason him, explaining that even if there's the need of a lasting and stable order, it cannot be based on leveling the people or on a strict division of society, but must be based on a mutual recognition of the need that someone, in the last resort, has to take the weight of command, but it must happen in an organic manner. The father repents but while he's embracing his daughter he's brutally murdered along with Cleo by Julius, eager to take control of what Reinhard has unleashed . The final battle begins and will lead to the inevitable defeat of the Plenipotentiary and the fact that , despite everything, our protagonist will be condemned to live alone in a world of ruins created by himself.