

In this world, a powerful nation that controls the global economic lifeline stands at the pinnacle among all countries. This nation, through gene-editing technology, predetermines the fate and role of every citizen even before birth. The offspring of athletes are engineered to be muscular, long-limbed sports prodigies, while the descendants of teachers are endowed with docile, peaceful, and patient personality traits. To ensure absolute compliance with the status quo, infants are implanted with a gene associated with "obedience" and "numbness" before birth, aka **the Obedience Gene**. This genetic editing preordains each individual's life trajectory, rendering them incapable of questioning or rebelling against their destiny. They are instilled with the belief that "the president's directives are absolutely correct" and that "one must absolutely obey the president's commands." Under this highly controlled regime, the nation has achieved unprecedented strength, and other countries dare not openly criticize its policies or dark secrets. Due to the nation's unique nature, its citizens are prohibited from emigrating to other countries, and one of the prerequisites for obtaining immigration status is undergoing gene-editing surgery.

The city of Liberion lies on the border of this nation, a circular metropolis encircled by walls over ten meters high. The city radiates outward from the central ring, expanding into the second, third, fourth, fifth rings, and so on. The first ring is primarily responsible for arms manufacturing and urban planning management, the second ring focuses on technological development, the third ring is dedicated to entertainment venues, the fourth ring comprises residential areas and educational institutions, and so forth. Each ring has its own military and administrators, forming a power structure reminiscent of the "Three Kingdoms" era.

The birth of Liberion is closely linked to a secret government human experiment. Dissatisfied with mere gene-editing technology, the government sought to create "superhumans" for warfare by researching the fusion of human bodies with special substances to awaken extraordinary abilities. This experiment offered participants the chance to evolve into individuals with unique talents. However, the human body struggles to withstand the backlash from such fusion, resulting in the death of approximately 90% of the subjects. Ultimately, the survivors formed a team of superhumans, becoming the government's ultimate trump card.

In this world, supernatural abilities are divided into three distinct attributes, each corresponding to a specific group of individuals:

1. **Material Energy:** Possessors can alter the external characteristics of objects, such as size, hardness, quantity, and temperature.
2. **Chemical Energy:** Possessors can change the chemical properties of objects, such as texture and melting point.
3. **Spiritual Energy:** The most unique of the abilities, it allows direct attacks on a target's mind or spirit rather than their physical body. Those attacked by spiritual energy may experience fatigue, mental deterioration, and in severe cases, loss of self-awareness, becoming "vegetative."

However, the existence of Ability Factors has disrupted the government's control. These factors enable ability users to break free from the constraints of the "obedience gene," fostering "self-awareness" and causing them to deviate from the government's plans. These ability users have widely promoted the concept of self-awareness, advocating for people to break free from the shackles of the "obedience gene" and "live for themselves." They united with a large number of genetically modified individuals dissatisfied with the status quo and, leveraging the resources and technology the government invested in ability experiments, launched a war against the central government after prolonged secret training.

To prevent further escalation, the government reached an agreement with the war instigators, designating a territory nearly the size of a small nation within the country's interior for these individuals to live autonomously. The government promised not to genetically edit their descendants. In exchange, those entering the city were forbidden from leaving except under special circumstances. The government would regularly deliver supplies to ensure basic survival but would not interfere excessively with the city's development. Thus, Liberion City became an isolated enclave, both a sanctuary and a prison for ability users.

The establishment of Liberion City served not only as a settlement for ability users but also for a crucial reason—energy.

Ability users possess a special substance called Ability Factors within their bodies. Each ability user has a threshold; the higher the threshold, the greater the concentration of Ability Factors. However, the presence of Ability Factors can destabilize the mental state of ability users, causing their thought patterns to significantly differ from ordinary people. At the same time, the concentration of Ability Factors directly determines the strength of an ability user, meaning the more powerful an ability user is, the more erratic they tend to appear. The government discovered that Ability Factors could be extracted from blood and transformed into high-intensity energy, making them highly valuable. As a result, the government concentrated all ability users within Liberion City, periodically conducting **"mental health check-ups"** as a pretext to draw blood and harvest Ability Factors, which were then converted into energy for national use. The energy extracted from Ability Factors of different attributes varied significantly in effect, further enhancing their strategic value.

When ability users employ their powers, they consume their Ability Factors. Each ability user has a median range for their threshold. If they excessively use their abilities in a single battle, depleting their Ability Factors below this range, the factors may not naturally recover (under normal circumstances, consumed Ability Factors gradually regenerate over time). This condition can be somewhat mitigated by injecting specially formulated drugs. However, if an individual lacks strong conviction and frequently overuses their abilities, their median range may gradually rise, and the recovery rate of their Ability Factors may significantly decrease, potentially leading to the decline or even loss of their abilities.

Within the confines of Liberion City, children awaken to their unique abilities upon reaching

a certain age. Although these powers are typically inherited genetically, a small fraction of the population is born without any abilities. Liberion City operates as a quintessential free-market society, where corporations are driven solely by profit, and schools, with their exorbitant tuition fees, prioritize revenue over education, leaving many without the privilege of learning. The city is awash with armaments, and conflicts frequently erupt over territorial disputes and political interests. In this volatile environment, the circus plays an unexpected role—it serves as a conduit for smuggling weapons produced in the first ring to the military camps of leaders in other rings, reaping substantial profits from the price differential.

The city's educational institutions are primarily divided into three categories:

1. **Pure Academic Schools:** These focus solely on traditional academic disciplines, devoid of any instruction on the theory or application of supernatural abilities.
2. **Pure Ability Schools:** These are dedicated entirely to the education of supernatural abilities, nurturing students in both theoretical knowledge and practical combat skills.
3. **Comprehensive Schools:** These offer a balanced curriculum that includes both academic and ability education, providing students with a broader range of learning opportunities.

Annually, the ability and comprehensive schools collaborate to host an Ability Selection Tournament. This event draws the attention of numerous renowned research institutes, corporations, and organizations, serving as a crucial platform for recruiting fresh talent. Students who distinguish themselves in the tournament often gain access to substantial resources and opportunities, but they also become entangled in the intricate web of power and profit.

In Liberion City, ability users are required to periodically receive **Ability Factor inhibitors**; otherwise, the side effects of the factors would trigger destructive and homicidal urges, rendering them extremely violent, with symptoms including elevated body temperature, facial flushing, and mental confusion.

To consolidate public support, the leadership of Liberion City introduced the ideology of the **"Children of the Gods" theory** at its founding. This theory recounts that centuries ago, the world was inhabited by humans and two deities with extraordinary powers. One of these ancient deities, moved by deep compassion for human physical capabilities, lifespan, and abilities, extracted "Ability Factors" from itself to modify human genes, aiming to enhance human survival. However, upon receiving these factors, humans not only failed to show gratitude but instead imprisoned the deity and excessively extracted its Ability Factors. Upon learning the truth, the other deity, enraged, executed the leaders of the revolt and revoked the abilities granted to humans. The few ability users who escaped subsequently established Liberion City, isolating themselves from the outside world and forming a unique, closed societal system. Influenced by this theory, the citizens of Liberion City generally regard the outside world's humans as "primitives" who have not evolved with Ability Factors and, under the influence of so-called "obedience genes," have become completely devoid of independent thought. The residents of Liberion City consider themselves the "Children of the Gods," firmly believing that Ability Factors are the supreme gift bestowed upon them by

the deities, a symbol of divine compassion and grace. However, the minority within the city who cannot awaken their abilities are seen as outcasts, deemed "forsaken" by the deities, cursed individuals who should undergo transformation to integrate into society.

To address this group, the female president established an institution known as the **"Sanctuary."** All children who fail to awaken their abilities by a certain age are sent there. In the Sanctuary, these children are forcibly injected with Ability Factors. If the injected factors do not reject the inert factors within their bodies, the children survive and gain the abilities of the newly injected factors. However, the reality is that the vast majority (about 90%) of the children die in the Sanctuary due to severe rejection reactions. This brutal selection mechanism showcases the city's extreme veneration of abilities. In fact, the Sanctuary is one of the female president's laboratories, where children become unfortunate experimental subjects, laying the groundwork for her future plans.

By injecting maternal Ability Factors into ordinary humans (or those without abilities), there is a minimal chance that the ordinary humans can be transformed into ability users. Ability Factors can be seen as the materialization of a person's beliefs. The stronger the belief, the stronger the Ability Factors usually are. However, whether a person can successfully acquire Ability Factors depends not only on their physical compatibility and the strength of their beliefs but also on whether the Ability Factors are willing to accept the person. Although this may seem somewhat idealistic, the fusion of Ability Factors with their host is essentially a two-way selection process. If either party cannot accept the other, it results in the death of the transformed individual.

Despite the dominance of the "Children of the Gods" theory in Liberion City, a few remain unassimilated. These include survivors of the Sanctuary, who, having witnessed the agony of the transformation process and the loss of control during ability outbreaks, develop a strong aversion to transformation. Regarding this, the female president once coldly stated, "As long as Ability Factors flow in your blood, the outside world will always see you as freaks and monsters."

Ordinary humans and ability users are no longer the same species.

In search of a sense of belonging, these unassimilated individuals refer to themselves as "the forsaken children of human society," choosing to remain in the city to atone. They yearn for the day they can return to the outside world, be reaccepted by human society, and completely purge the Ability Factors from their bodies (whether active or inert). Until the outbreak of the war, they still convinced themselves that with enough sincerity, humans would eventually accept them again. However, upon being imprisoned, they finally realized the truth of the female president's words—the chasm between them and ordinary humans is irreparable.

After more than a century of self-governance, the residents of Liberion City have grown increasingly discontent with their isolated existence. In a bid for freedom, the city's current

female president has mobilized an army composed of ability users dissatisfied with the status quo, nearly enlisting every combat-capable individual within the city's walls to wage a large-scale war against the outside world. Before the war, to enhance her army's combat effectiveness, the female president restricted the administration of inhibitors, leaving her soldiers in a highly unstable mental state but significantly boosting their power. However, to their surprise, the government forces outside the city have significantly surpassed expectations, demonstrating a marked improvement since the last conflict and effortlessly crushing the city's army. This battle has made the government acutely aware of the substantial risks associated with the centralized management of ability users, as their collective powers, whether strong or weak, could pose a serious threat if united.

The surviving ability users have been apprehended by the government and confined to facilities known as **"Mental Management Institutes."** Ostensibly established to treat the mental side effects induced by Ability Factors, these institutes are, in reality, designed to further exploit the users' powers. The general populace (ordinary citizens of the external world) has readily accepted this, as ability users have long been perceived as potential threats to societal security.

Within the Mental Management Institutes, ability users are subjected to near-daily "health checks," during which a portion of their Ability Factors is extracted and converted into high-efficiency energy. This frequent extraction leads to a gradual stabilization of the users' mental states, but this is a mere facade, as their willpower is being steadily eroded.

The extraction of Ability Factors is a delicate process. These factors are akin to capricious "little entities." If blood is forcibly drawn from an ability user to extract the Ability Factors, there is a chance the factors may "self-destruct," resulting in the simultaneous death of both the factor and its host. This phenomenon manifests as the sudden, unexplained death of the ability user, a scenario witnessed by the female president. Subsequent research revealed that hypnotizing the ability users before extraction, placing them in a numbed state where they lose their free will, prevents the factors from becoming enraged and self-destructing. Thus, by immediately extracting the factors from their blood in this state, the government minimized the occurrence of sudden deaths in the Mental Management Institutes.

In times of energy scarcity, ability users became the optimal backup energy source. Many ability users in the Mental Management Institutes were drained of their blood until they perished. Once the Ability Factors within an ability user were fully exploited, they were released back into society. These survivors struggled to reintegrate into a rapidly evolving world, their willpower eroded by the excessive consumption of their Ability Factors, leaving them mentally frail and devoid of the drive to live. Despite government propaganda and assurances of their harmlessness, ordinary citizens remained wary, reluctant to associate with them. The typical fate awaiting these survivors was either a destitute existence or a lonely death.

In truth, the female president had been aware of Liberion City's true purpose long before

her tenure. The government had concealed the fact that Ability Factors could serve as high-efficiency energy, informing the public only that abilities were weapons for warfare. However, the frequent deaths of ability users following "health checks" within the city raised her suspicions, especially since her mother was one of the victims. Sensing something amiss, she secretly formed a research team of trusted scientists after assuming office to investigate the composition of Ability Factors. Through their research, the team unexpectedly discovered that a substance within the Ability Factors could be used as a super-energy source, unveiling the truth behind Liberion City and providing crucial scientific evidence for her subsequent actions.

Her incarceration in the "Mental Management Institute" after the defeat was a part of her plan. The ability soldiers she had previously recruited were nothing more than cannon fodder, while the **elite assassination squad** and the **external ability user headquarters** (an underground organization of ability users in the external world) were her true trump cards. These forces were stationed outside the city, ready to support her. The female president's ambitions extended beyond being a mere "city leader"; she aspired to rule the entire nation—not a puppet state, but a vibrant country composed of real, living individuals. Perhaps because she herself was an ability user, she championed the power of individual free will, aiming to end the era of genetic editing and restore an independent personality and fulfilling life to her people. To this end, she sought to lead a genetic transformation of humanity—by injecting Ability Factors into all.

Long before the war, the female president had planted agents outside the walls to build post-war refugees. Although the outside world's view of ability users is overwhelmingly hostile, seeing the city's inhabitants (perhaps they no longer even recognize them as human) as monsters, beasts devoid of basic emotions and rationality, there is a group that, despite the influence of 'obedience genes,' accepts and supports the existence of ability users. The researchers among this group have formed an underground research institute dedicated to studying Ability Factors, secretly providing post-war fleeing ability users with essential medications like Ability Factor inhibitors and restorative agents.

Main storyline

The story unfolds through the perspective of a boy named **Lucas Niacis**, one of the "unfortunates" born without the ability to awaken supernatural powers. His parents are staunch adherents of the "Children of the Gods" theory, so when officials came to take Lucas to the **Sanctuary**, they cooperated willingly, even eagerly. In the Sanctuary, Lucas was injected with **Chemical-Type Ability** Factors and subjected to countless rounds of brutal experiments and excruciating rejection reactions. Miraculously, he survived and successfully acquired the Chemical-Type ability—through touch, he could alter the ignition point of objects or living beings, causing them to spontaneously combust. Additionally, the altered ignition point could spread to other objects or beings through contact. The range and duration of this ability initially depended on the strength and threshold of his Ability Factors.

Children who survived the Sanctuary underwent rigorous training and brainwashing before

being assigned to work under the female president, with their roles determined by their ability types. Lucas was selected for preliminary screening in the **Elite Ability Assassination Squad**, one of the president's core forces responsible for her safety during the battle and, when necessary, covering her retreat to the external world's Ability User Headquarters. However, during the battle, Lucas chose to defect from the squad, fleeing to the external world and disguising himself as an ordinary citizen.

Later, Lucas encountered a circus ringmaster and joined their troupe. This circus was composed of ability users who had survived the war but refused to join the Ability User Headquarters. They held a philosophy starkly different from the female president's, believing that Ability Factors should not be forcibly injected into all of humanity. On the surface, they were a traveling circus performing worldwide, but in reality, they secretly gathered intelligence on ability users from various nations, maintaining a neutral stance—neither supporting the female president's extreme rule nor fully aligning with the ordinary humans of the external world.

Circus Members:

1. Ringmaster

Ability: Material-Type "Spatial Distortion"

He can alter the form of space—compressing, stretching, or folding it. By stretching space, he can create an infinitely large area to store objects, while folding space allows him to achieve "teleportation" effects, among other uses.

2. Wire Dancer

Ability: Material-Type "Severance"

Initially, she can emit a single fiber-like thread from her fingers, resembling nanomaterial. Over time, she can produce multiple threads from any part of her body. Though the threads are nearly invisible, they emit a faint glow. Anything touched by these threads is cleanly cut.

3. Magician (Uncle)

Ability: (To be determined)

4. Acrobat Boy

Ability: (To be determined)

5. Acrobat Girl

Ability: (To be determined)

6. Scarred Clown

Ability: Material-Type (with a hint of Spiritual-Type) "Retrace"

By touching an object or living being, he can revert its state. This ability can be used for wound healing, Ability Factor restoration, or crime scene investigation. At advanced levels, he can visualize the evolution of an object's or being's state over time without altering its actual condition. Since the object's state isn't changed, this ability can visualize distant past

events with fewer time constraints. With high proficiency and under the right conditions, he can even glimpse the surroundings during the object's evolution, effectively peering into the past of a person or object.

7. Beast Tamer (Lucas)

Ability: Chemical-Type "Ignition Manipulation"

Lucas can alter the ignition points of objects or beings through touch, causing them to combust. This effect can spread to other objects or beings upon contact.

Within the circus, Lucas shares a close bond with the Magician (Uncle). The magician's son, **Delano**, was also born without abilities. Before Delano was diagnosed as normie, the magician was a fervent believer in the "Children of the Gods" theory. However, the arrival of his son shattered his beliefs, making him realize the complexity of the world—normie individuals, and even humans in the external world, were not as irredeemable as the female president claimed. Gradually, the magician developed new ideas and fled with Delano, trying to evade the headquarters' pursuit. Yet, years later, they were caught, and Delano was forcibly taken to the Sanctuary for transformation.

After the transformation, Delano survived and acquired a Spiritual-Type ability, enabling him to hypnotize people into a dazed state, causing them to unconsciously reveal their thoughts. Trained and recruited by the female president, Delano became a loyal tool, assigned to interrogation duties. This transformation turned Delano into a devoted servant of the president, while his father, the magician, became a symbol of the ideal parent in Lucas's eyes. The magician represented a new generation willing to reflect and change, while Lucas's parents symbolized the thoroughly indoctrinated conservatives.

However, Delano stands in stark contrast to Lucas. He believes his father's attempt to flee with him defied "the will of the gods," nearly causing him to miss the chance to escape his "curse" and remain a prisoner for life. This twisted belief filled Delano with resentment toward his father, driving him fully into the female president's camp.

One night, after a circus performance, the magician was lured to an abandoned factory near the circus by an anonymous informant who claimed to possess evidence of the circus's Liberion and forged identities. Despite his doubts, the magician went alone to investigate. What awaited him was not the truth, but a nightmare.

At the factory, the magician was captured by Delano and the female president's subordinates. They tortured him, demanding he reveal the circus's secrets. When the magician recognized his son among the interrogators, he gave up all resistance. Lucas later found the magician's body in the abandoned factory.

Some Additional Settings (Still to be Updated):

1. **Watchhouse:** Built on the walls of Liberion City, these are "eyes" established by external world forces to monitor the city's development from within.
2. **Underground Tunnels:** Liberion City is riddled with underground passages, created to evade the surveillance of the watchhouses. These tunnels also serve as the headquarters for the female president's research team, located directly beneath the central headquarters in the first ring.
3. **Conflict in Liberion City:** The city is rife with clashes, warfare, and disputes. Due to poor management, fierce battles between ability users of different attributes are a common sight in its streets and alleys.
4. **The Female President's Manipulation:** The female president is well aware that Delano is the magician's son, which is why she specifically assigned him to interrogate his father. Whether Delano, after more than a decade, can recognize the prisoner before him as his father, or whether his father's sacrifice has long been overshadowed by career prospects and lucrative rewards, remains unknown.
5. **The External World's President:** An extreme dictator, he tolerates no defiance of his commands. He positions himself as a "god," convinced that he is the ruler of the world, and that others are merely cogs in his machine—some important, some insignificant, but all must obey his will. His rule is built on absolute authority and fear, and any challenge to his authority is ruthlessly suppressed. Although some of his subordinates (due to the special nature of their positions and not having been implanted with the "obedience gene") harbor discontent towards his authoritarian rule, they have always lacked a suitable opportunity to rebel. Through a tight surveillance system, powerful military force, and omnipresent ideological control, the president stifles any potential threats in their infancy.
6. **The Female President:** Perhaps the emergence of the female president is the opportunity to break the deadlock. Not only does she hold real power in Liberion City, but she also deeply understands the strength and potential of ability users. Her rise offers a glimmer of hope to those long oppressed under the president's authoritarian rule. She represents a new order—one based on the power of ability users, rather than the old system reliant solely on genetic editing and ideological control. However, is she truly willing to cooperate with these subordinates, or is she merely using them as new pawns in her power game? Is her goal to overthrow the president's rule, or to replace him and become the new "god"?
7. Due to the unique nature of his profession (to be determined), Uncle Magician already had some knowledge about the truth of the Sanctuary. That's why he assumed Delano was dead after being taken there.
8. **Ability factors Reshaping:** Within the sanctuary, individuals receive ability factor infusions based on their latent innate potential - dormant traits the system claims don't exist. This matching reduces death rate during the infusion. For certain special individuals, however, multiple ability types are infused simultaneously. While significantly riskier, this experimental approach offers unprecedented potential for those who survive the process. Since
9. **Debate about the ability of the female president:** It has been observed that the female president demonstrated a combined effect of multiple ability factors, fueling

rumors that she underwent enhancement procedures. These speculations have spawned two competing theories:

1. "The CEO is one of the unfortunate children without ability"(Commonly circulated by those who reject the "Children of God" doctrine)
2. "She voluntarily underwent enhancement to amplify her powers"(Championed by her supporters)