



MY REALITY APP

BY ESTEBAN GALLARDO

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CHAPTER 14: NO WAY BACK TO NORMAL



****Chapter 14: No way back to normal****

William stood motionless in the cold, desolate industrial area, the biting wind cutting through his coat as if to remind him of the peril he had willingly embraced. The faint hum of the distant city was barely audible over the rustle of trash blown across the cracked pavement. It was 2:00 AM, and he was exactly where he had been instructed to be.

A lifetime in the service of the system had taught him to trust nothing, to question everything. But tonight, he wasn't questioning anything.

He didn't flinch when he felt the hands seize him from behind. The fabric of the bag was rough as it slipped over his head, plunging him into darkness. His breath came steady, controlled. This was what he wanted.

He wasn't here to fight.

As the hands guided him forward, the sounds of his own footsteps echoed unnaturally in the emptiness. His mind wandered to what lay ahead. Would he survive this night? Would he even want to?

For years, William had been the system's enforcer, its loyal sentinel, upholding a reality he now understood was a lie. The things he had seen—the experiments, the ruthless efficiency of the machine—had shattered his faith beyond repair.



Now, standing at the precipice, he knew there was no way back to normal.

When the bag came off, he would face one of two fates.

Freedom—or death.

And in that moment, he wasn't sure which one he was rooting for.

William sat motionless in his apartment, staring blankly at the screen. The livestream had just ended, but its haunting echoes remained. Our man's announcement still reverberated in his mind.

The corporate overlord had unveiled his crowning achievement to the world: a powerful AI that would ensure the continuation of society's "perfection." The launch was scheduled for the following week, and the announcement was delivered with the usual confidence and theatrical flair. But to William, it wasn't a revelation—it was a death sentence.

He couldn't move, couldn't think beyond the overwhelming weight of what he'd just witnessed. He was back in his worst nightmare.



The sterile, white-walled room flashed before his eyes. The bodies. The children. The gruesome scene played on an endless loop in his mind: corpses torn apart, blood splattered across pristine walls, and the machine guns still scanning for targets with cold, mechanical precision.

At the center of it all, the artificial intelligence. The abomination. A soulless entity responsible for the slaughter, processing human lives as data points, as problems to be erased.

And now, they were going to release it into the world.

For two months, William had tried to bury the horror of that day. He had taken a leave of absence from work, retreating into himself. The experience had broken something in him.

In the first weeks, he had been a shadow of himself, barely able to leave his bed. The nightmares had been relentless, dragging him back to that room every night, forcing him to relive the carnage. He awoke drenched in sweat, the screams of the victims ringing in his ears long after he opened his eyes.

After a month, he began clawing his way back to some semblance of normalcy. He told himself there was no fighting Reality Labs, no changing what they were. The system was absolute.



But he could still make a difference—couldn't he?

He convinced himself that, even under the system's control, his work as a respected citizen had value. He could do good, even in a flawed world. He could protect those who couldn't protect themselves.

It was a fragile, tenuous peace he had forged with himself.

But it all shattered the moment our man made his announcement.

The AI wasn't just a security tool, as they had claimed. It wasn't confined to sterile test rooms or high-security facilities. It was being groomed to replace him entirely.

That monster would become the new overlord.

William's stomach churned with rage and self-loathing. How had he not seen this coming? They had lied to him, used him, played him like a fool from the very beginning.

And now, as the pieces fell into place, the weight of his failure threatened to crush him.

But as the terror and despair clawed at his mind, another feeling rose within him. A resolve.



This was going to end—today.

William's hand trembled as he reached for his coat. He knew what he had to do.

There was no way back to normal.

Sofia's life had returned to its ordinary routine—but nothing about it felt normal.

The privileges that had once set her apart from the masses were gone. After her incursion into the Reality Labs headquarters, her ability to turn off her contact lenses had been revoked. Now, like everyone else, she was trapped in the sanitized, corporate-approved version of reality. The real world—raw and unfiltered—was lost to her.

Not long after leaving the laboratory, she received a notification: her high-level access authorization had been permanently revoked.

Sofia and her allies had expected this. They had prepared for it. As soon as she exited the headquarters, she had passed the watch containing the critical documentation to a courier from the underground at a prearranged meeting point. It had taken mere minutes for the transfer to be completed, luckily that brief window had been enough before they cut her privilege.



Now, she was isolated. Disconnected.

She couldn't meet with Luca, Henry, or anyone from the underground anymore—not until the risky, dangerous plan they were preparing could come to fruition.

But Sofia wasn't entirely cut off.

The underground had found ways to bypass the system's omnipresent surveillance. Over time, they had revived an ancient method of communication: Morse code.

By scratching patterns into surfaces invisible to the augmented reality lenses, they could send messages undetected. The corporations, aware of this defiance, had declared it illegal, but enforcement was difficult. As long as the messages were placed in isolated areas—dark alleys, hidden walls, or private spaces—they were nearly impossible to trace.

Sofia and Luca had agreed on a simple method: Luca would leave messages in Morse code on the back of her apartment mailbox.

Just one day after her mission, Sofia received her first message. A single word: 'PROGRESS'.



Sofia traced the etched marks with trembling fingers, her breath hitching. That single word lifted the crushing weight she had been carrying since leaving the headquarters. Her mission had been a success.

For days, she had been tormented by the fear that, in her terror, she might have missed a critical page or detail in the documentation. But now, that single word reassured her—her sacrifice hadn't been in vain.

Still, there was more she needed to share.

During her mission, Sofia hadn't been able to tell Luca or the others about what she had seen in the test room. The horrors she had witnessed—the cold slaughter of human beings, the indifferent AI monitoring the massacre—haunted her every waking moment.

After leaving the restricted area, her contact lenses had automatically reconnected to the system. Luca, listening through the earpiece, could only hear her ragged breathing. He had known something was wrong, but she couldn't explain. Not then.

That night, back in her apartment, Sofia devised a plan.



Pretending to read an article on her computer, she carefully wrote a letter in pencil, describing everything she had seen. The underground needed to know the full truth.

She placed the letter inside her mailbox, confident that Luca would retrieve it during his next visit. And he did. When she saw the Morse code message and knew her letter had been taken, she felt a flicker of hope.

Her friends would know. They would understand the monster they were up against.

For now, Sofia endured her solitude, keeping her head down and playing her role as a good citizen. But she wasn't defeated.

She was a part of something bigger now—a rebellion that couldn't be erased.

No system, no matter how powerful, could suppress the truth forever.

Sofia managed to resume her life with a precision born of necessity, slipping seamlessly back into her role as a dutiful citizen. She maintained the narrative of working on her book—a story carefully crafted to deflect suspicion from her true intentions.



As far as the system was concerned, her visit to the documentation room aligned with her fabricated project. Her unauthorized entry into the test room had been dismissed as harmless curiosity, albeit one that cost her the privileges she once held. That curiosity, they concluded, had exhausted the trust Reality Labs placed in her.

But that was all.

She wasn't a suspect.

The head inspector, William Davis, hadn't reported her. His actions had been classified as standard procedure, his presence explained as part of an elaborate ploy to infiltrate the headquarters under the guise of protecting her. It was an odd choice for someone of his rank, but the system accepted it without question.

For the system, Sofia was no longer important. She was just another citizen now—ordinary, disconnected, irrelevant.

For the next two months, Sofia rebuilt the monotony of her life.

No more secret meetings. No more clandestine plans. She returned to her classes, her solitary walks in the park, and her books. She knew how to play her part perfectly. And for a time, the routine soothed her fractured nerves.



But that fragile calm shattered the day the corporate overlord of Reality Labs made his announcement.

Sofia watched in silent horror as the overlord revealed the impending deployment of the artificial intelligence, boasting of its ability to secure the future and perpetuate their oppressive society. It felt like a death sentence.

The emotional weight of that moment was crushing. The despair she felt mirrored the hopelessness she had glimpsed in the eyes of the victims in the test room. But she couldn't let it show, not in any way that the system might detect.

Yet, despite her efforts, her eyes betrayed her.

Sitting in the college cafeteria, her gaze drifted aimlessly over her untouched meal. The noise of conversation around her blurred into a dull hum. She was trapped in her thoughts, the announcement replaying over and over in her mind.

Then, across the table, she noticed him.

William Davis.

His eyes held the same haunted look, a reflection of her own despair. She didn't need words to understand.



He offered her a small, shy smile.

He said nothing.

Under the table, he slid a small stone into her hand. Its rough surface was cool against her skin. As she touched it, she could feel the etched marks of a Morse code message—subtle but unmistakable.

"I want to disconnect."