



MY REALITY APP

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CHAPTER 16: SHOWDOWN



****Chapter 16: Showdown****

The midday sun reflected harshly off the sleek, mirrored surfaces of Reality Labs' headquarters, a monolithic testament to the corporation's dominion over society. Luca held his grip on the laptop nervously, ready to type any command that would allow them to overcome unexpected dangers during their perilous final mission. The digital camouflage was running smoothly, with no major issues. To the system, he and William appeared as nothing more than two sharply dressed executives on routine business. To those who might glance their way, their movements were ordinary—deliberate, yet unremarkable.

In reality, every step they took was a calculated gamble against the all-seeing eyes of the system.

William kept his hand close to his concealed firearm, his sharp gaze scanning the bustling courtyard as they approached the security checkpoint. He knew the augmented reality filters wouldn't show anyone the weapon or the unauthorized laptop Luca was carrying. But that didn't stop his pulse from quickening. It only took one failure, one imperfection in Luca's code, to bring the entire mission crashing down.

The checkpoint loomed ahead, a sterile gate manned by a single guard sitting behind a sleek black terminal. The man's disinterested expression suggested the monotony of his job—but William knew better. Behind that calm demeanor was the brutal efficiency of the system, ready to bring the full force of Reality Labs' security crashing down on any perceived threat.



"Good morning. We have an appointment in the Business Headquarters," William said, his voice steady and confident, the way a seasoned executive would sound.

The guard's cold eyes flickered toward them briefly before turning to his terminal. William couldn't help but notice the faint grimace on the man's face—the subtle irritation of someone accustomed to dealing with the self-important elite.

"Proceed to section A-1," the guard replied, his voice devoid of warmth. It struck William as dissonant; two months ago, he would have heard a bright, welcoming tone. Now, unfiltered, the man's contempt was palpable.

William gave a polite nod, murmured his thanks, and walked past the checkpoint with Luca at his side. His hand relaxed slightly, but his senses remained razor-sharp. He leaned toward Luca as they entered the sprawling inner courtyard. "Your software's holding up," he said under his breath.

"It will hold," Luca replied, his voice betraying only the faintest edge of tension. "Let's focus on getting to the mainframe."

The mainframe building loomed ahead, its sleek, windowless design radiating an ominous energy. This was the heart of Reality Labs' empire, the core of the My Reality app. To the public, it was marketed as the most secure facility in the world, the beating heart of progress and order. To Luca and William, it was a fortress of deception, a digital prison that kept billions trapped in a manufactured reality.



As they walked through the open campus, passing employees engrossed in their augmented versions of reality, William couldn't help but reflect on the contrast. These people, with their tailored, filtered lives, moved with unshakable confidence. None of them had any idea what lay beneath the veneer of perfection.

And none of them would see the two of them for what they truly were: the agents of its undoing.

They reached the entrance, a sleek, black panel embedded with biometric scanners. This was the last point of entry before stepping into the beast's lair. Luca raised his wrist, letting the scanner read the micro-chip he had extracted and reprogrammed using William's stolen chip as a template.

A tense moment passed. Then, with a soft beep, the door slid open.

The first hurdle was cleared.

As the doors slid shut behind them with a low hiss, Luca felt the tension in his chest loosen slightly—but only slightly. There was no time to celebrate. They were officially inside the belly of the beast.



The entrance hall to the mainframe exuded an austere, oppressive atmosphere. Harsh fluorescent lights reflected off polished steel walls, giving the impression of a sterile, unyielding fortress. A pair of security guards flanked the checkpoint, their stances rigid and faces unreadable behind the slight glint of their augmented reality lenses. Beyond them, the elevator doors gleamed—a gateway to the heart of Reality Labs' omnipotent system.

Luca's fingers twitched as he reviewed the guard profiles on his handheld device. He had prepared for this moment, anticipating variables and contingencies, but the proximity to danger tightened the air around him. William, standing beside him, adjusted his suit jacket and exhaled quietly. They exchanged a fleeting glance—a silent pact. The performance had to be flawless.

As they approached the checkpoint, Luca activated his hack. His goal: infiltrate the guards' AR lenses and overlay their system's interface with a fabricated authorization. It wasn't a simple task. The mainframe's protocols were impenetrable directly, but the guards' personal feeds were a softer target. All he needed was time.

William stepped forward, his demeanor transforming instantly into that of a haughty, self-assured executive. His voice dripped with mockery as he gestured broadly at the room.



"So this is it? The infamous mainframe? Hard to believe something so small keeps the entire world running. You'd think they'd make it... I don't know, less of a rat's nest." He snorted, the derision in his tone as palpable as the tension in the air.

The guards stiffened, exchanging a wary glance. They had dealt with their share of arrogant suits, men and women drunk on their perceived importance, who often carried the weight of powerful connections. Even the slightest misstep with someone like this could spell the end of a career—or worse. The older of the two guards, his voice carefully neutral, replied, "Yes, sir. This is the mainframe facility."

William turned to Luca, his smirk widening. "Can you believe it? All the power in the world and it's housed in a hole like this. Pathetic!" He chuckled, the sound grating and obnoxious.

The guards stood silently, their postures rigid. Every muscle in their bodies screamed to retaliate, but fear kept them in check. William noticed their growing discomfort and leaned into the act, raising the stakes to buy Luca the precious seconds he needed.

"And you two," he sneered, his eyes narrowing at the guards. "How long have you been babysitting this rat's hole?"



The second guard's jaw twitched as his anger flared, but he forced himself to answer.

"Ten years, sir." His tone was clipped, his barely contained fury bleeding through.

William threw his head back, laughing loud and long enough to echo in the hall. The guards exchanged uneasy glances, their patience visibly fraying. William knew he was treading dangerous ground, pushing them to the edge. Any more, and their fear might turn to recklessness. He caught Luca's subtle nod out of the corner of his eye—the hack was complete.

The performance shifted. William's tone became sharp, businesslike, as he said, "Enough of this. We're here on official business. Theodore Lee and Joshua Wright. Check your system."

The first guard, grateful for the shift in tone, turned to his console. His eyes flickered as his AR lenses overlaid the falsified information Luca had planted. On his console, the screen displayed the truth—no such meeting existed. But his lenses showed a flawless forgery: a verified appointment, complete with high-priority clearance.

The guard straightened, his voice subdued but polite.



"Your meeting is on floor four, subsection D. You can take the elevator on the right."

William nodded curtly, his expression carefully neutral. He resisted the urge to push further, knowing the tension in the room had already stretched to its limit. Without another word, he motioned to Luca, and together they crossed the checkpoint.

As they stepped into the elevator, Luca finally allowed himself to breathe.

"That was close," he muttered, his voice low.

William pressed the button for the fourth floor, his hand steady despite the adrenaline coursing through him. "Too close"

The elevator doors slid shut, sealing them inside. Below, the mainframe awaited—the beating heart of the illusion that had enslaved humanity.

The elevator hummed softly as it descended, a brief sanctuary of stillness before the storm. Luca and William exchanged a tense glance, their expressions a mirror of grim determination. Below them lay the underground floors of the mainframe—a place where illusions ceased to exist. The My Reality app was powerless here. No augmented reality overlays. No manipulated feeds. Every camera, every person, would see them for what they truly were: intruders.



Luca adjusted the strap of his laptop bag, his fingers twitching in anticipation. "Once we're out there," he said quietly, "there's no turning back. The system will know. Everyone will know."

William nodded, his hand resting lightly on the grip of his pistol. "Then we make every second count."

Luca had meticulously planned this moment for years. His breakthrough had come when he uncovered a fail-safe protocol embedded in the contact lenses—a hidden subroutine likely left by the original developers. The protocol allowed for a complete severance of the neural link between the lenses and the brain, rendering them harmless to remove. It was an emergency measure, never intended for widespread use. But Luca had rewritten the script, ready to execute it on a global scale. If successful, it would free millions from the grip of My Reality and expose the truth.

All they needed was time. Enough to access the mainframe directly and deploy the hack.

The elevator slowed, its hum fading into silence. The doors slid open with a mechanical hiss, revealing a corridor bathed in cold, sterile light. Luca and William stepped out, their movements calm, deliberate. Every second mattered, and their only advantage was surprise.



Ten seconds later, alarms blared, the shrill sound echoing through the labyrinthine corridors. Red warning lights pulsed along the walls, bathing everything in an ominous glow. A synthetic voice crackled over the intercom:

"Unauthorized presence detected. Security teams en route."

Luca and William broke into a run, their footsteps pounding against the tiled floor. The sound of approaching boots reverberated in the distance, drawing closer with every passing moment. The corridor twisted and branched in multiple directions, offering fleeting opportunities to evade pursuit.

"There!" Luca shouted, spotting a workstation tucked into an alcove.

He sprinted ahead, yanking a cable from his bag as he reached the terminal. Dropping to one knee, he plugged his laptop into the access point, his fingers flying over the keyboard to run the password access hack. The hack would need 30 seconds to do the work. "Cover me!"

William nodded, drawing his pistol and positioning himself to watch the corridor. His eyes darted to every shadow, every movement. The echoes of shouting guards grew louder.



30 seconds.

William raised his pistol as the first guard rounded the corner. "Stop!" the guard barked, lifting his weapon.

25 seconds.

William fired a warning shot, forcing the guard to duck for cover. The bullet ricocheted harmlessly off the metal wall, but it bought them precious time.

20 seconds.

The shouts multiplied, the pounding of boots growing deafening. More guards appeared, fanning out and finding cover.

15 seconds.

William cursed under his breath as the security forces began to surround them. Then, a commanding voice rang out: "You have ten seconds to surrender!"

10 seconds.

William stepped forward, raising his voice to match the leader's. "I'm William Davis, Police Head Inspector. Officer number AX4521. Check it! They're lying to you! The AI will kill us all!"



5 seconds.

The guards hesitated, confusion rippling through their ranks. A pause. Just enough doubt to buy a few seconds.

Luca told William, "I'm in. Running the hack now"

William's heart pounded as the leader barked back, "Your credentials are revoked! You have 5 seconds to surrender, or we will open fire!"

Five.

Luca's fingers danced over the keyboard, sweat dripping from his brow.

Four.

"Come on, come on!" Luca hissed through gritted teeth.

Three.

The guards tensed, fingers hovering over their triggers.

Two.

"Almost there!"

One.

"Done!"