



MY REALITY APP

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CHAPTER 7: SOFIA



****Chapter 7: Sofia****

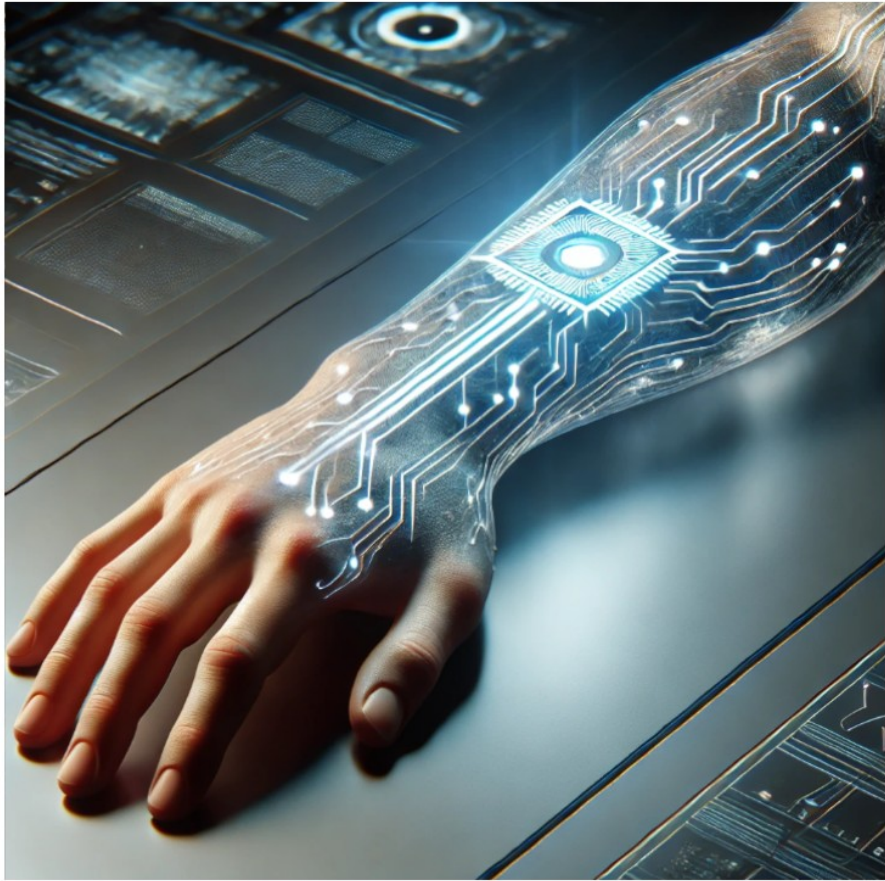
Luca's first real test had a singular, ambitious purpose: to determine whether it was possible to deceive the My Reality system for an extended period of time. Not just for a fleeting moment or a minor subversion—but to truly cheat the system, creating individuals who could move undetected within its omnipresent surveillance.

The goal was clear: to get the perfect camouflage.

Luca's scripts were tied to two test subjects, their profiles carefully chosen to mirror the average security access of most citizens. Through his code, he sought to manipulate the system's data streams, filtering and altering information in real time. Whenever the system checked for updates or analyzed the actions of these two individuals, it would see nothing out of the ordinary—a carefully crafted facade hiding reality. The test was simple in theory but monumental in execution: could the camouflage work to infiltrate the system without triggering alarms?

But there was a glaring problem. A massive one.

The test subjects were low-level, ordinary citizens with average security profiles. Luca's scripts worked well for them, but his method fell apart the moment it encountered high-security profiles or restricted areas. For those, the challenge wasn't just about hacking into software—it was about overcoming hardware barriers.



High-security personnel carried something far more advanced: a microchip implanted beneath their skin. This system was completely independent, operating on an isolated network with no direct connection to either the New Internet or the underground's archaic old Internet. Its sole function was to validate authorization codes in a closed loop, ensuring no possible external interference.

The creator of this system had been a genius. Paranoid, yes, but brilliant. He had designed it with one unshakable principle: isolation. There were no backdoors, no hidden exploits, no vulnerabilities in the code. Unlike the ubiquitous contact lenses, which were everywhere and could be studied or stolen, the underground had never managed to get their hands on one of these microchips.

And without access to even a single chip—or the secret documentation detailing its workings—Luca had hit a wall.

He leaned forward, his elbows resting on a cluttered desk as he rubbed his temples, trying to focus. The underground's dimly lit hideout was buzzing with activity around him, but he barely noticed. His mind churned, grasping for a solution.



To infiltrate the true heart of the beast—the central mainframe of operations—the camouflage needed to go further. His scripts could get them close, perhaps to the perimeter of the system's defenses. But they couldn't breach the innermost sanctum. That required something more, something he didn't yet have.

They needed to become the beast's own.

They needed to mimic not just its outer workings but its very core.

But for that, they needed something extraordinary.

- A functional microchip.
- And the documentation detailing how it functioned.

Luca tapped his fingers rhythmically against the desk, staring at the tangled mess of notes and diagrams in front of him. He had always prided himself on finding ways into systems others deemed impenetrable. But this... this was different. He didn't even have a blueprint to work from, only the faintest echoes of rumors and scraps of data gathered from scattered underground sources.

He exhaled sharply, frustration bubbling to the surface. Without a chip to study, he had no way to reverse-engineer the system. Without the documentation, he couldn't even begin to understand its architecture.



And yet, giving up wasn't an option.

He stared at the flickering lightbulb hanging above him, its faint hum filling the silence as his thoughts raced. The answer wasn't in the system, he realized—it was in the people.

If they couldn't infiltrate the beast themselves, they needed someone who already belonged to it.

They needed a son of the beast to come to them.

But how?

The idea of ambushing a military security squad to obtain one of their microchips was tempting—but flawed. Luca knew the risks all too well. Those microchips were designed to self-destruct if the bearer's vital signs flatlined. Even if they managed to overpower a soldier and extract the chip, the moment it detected the absence of a pulse, it would likely burn itself out, rendering it useless.

No, that wasn't the way forward. He needed a new approach.

Luca leaned back in his chair, staring at the flickering lines of code on his monitor. The documentation. That was the key. Before worrying about hardware, he had to figure out if there was any possible way to access the system's technical documentation. Without it, they were blind. Unfortunately, the documentation was as heavily guarded as the microchips themselves.



Which brought him back to square one: the people.

Who had access to that level of classified information?

Luca's fingers flew across the keyboard as he searched the underground network's intelligence files, cross-referencing public and private records. His screen populated with names, ranks, and profiles—an exclusive list of individuals authorized to access the documentation. As expected, the majority were predictable: high-ranking military personnel, elite system administrators, and powerful corporate executives.

But then a name caught his eye, stopping him mid-scroll.

Sofia Carter.

The name stood out not for its familiarity, but for its oddity. Sofia's profile was unlike the others on the list. She wasn't military or technical staff. She wasn't an executive or a high-level engineer. She was... a historian documentalist.

Luca frowned, curiosity igniting his mind. Why on Earth would someone with her background have access to such sensitive material?



He dove deeper into her records, pulling every thread he could find. Sofia Carter was around his age, just thirty years old. She had built her career studying the evolution of technology through history, a field that seemed worlds apart from the cold, clinical work of security protocols. But then he found it: a thesis she had written for her doctorate years ago.

Luca's heart quickened as he skimmed through the document. It was a meticulous exploration of technological development, tracing the roots of current innovations back through decades of experimentation and failure. And there, buried within the text, was a passing mention of the security system. The thesis didn't reveal any critical information, of course—it was academic, sanitized for public consumption. But its very existence explained why she would be granted access to the documentation.

Luca sat back, his mind racing. Sofia Carter represented something unexpected—a potential vulnerability. While military officers and corporate executives were hardened against threats, Sofia's academic background suggested a different kind of person. Someone who might be curious. Someone who might question.

She could be the thread he needed to pull.



Hacking directly into Sofia Carter's profile was out of the question. Like all high-security personnel, she had the microchip implanted—a fortress of isolation that Luca dared not attempt to breach. The risk was simply too great. But Sofia had one vulnerability, one that Luca had painstakingly uncovered: her day-to-day life as a professor.

The academic world she inhabited offered a rare loophole. Professors, students, and most staff at her college didn't carry the microchip. That lack of direct integration made it the perfect environment for Luca to test a software tool he had been quietly developing—a program designed to piggyback on the My Reality system. It allowed him to replicate the augmented reality feed from another person's lenses, seeing exactly what they saw.

For months, Luca used this tool to shadow Sofia, hopping between the profiles of her students, colleagues, and anyone else who interacted with her. It was invasive—he knew that—but necessary. She was the only lead he had.

The more he watched, the more he realized how different she was. In a society where ambition often manifested as cutthroat opportunism, Sofia was an anomaly. She was humble, genuine, and entirely uninterested in the power plays that defined the corporate elite. She loved her books, her teaching, and the solace of the few remaining parks untouched by the relentless march of construction.



Yet it wasn't just her character that made her unique. It was her privilege.

Sofia's profile had something exceptional—something Luca had never seen before. Unlike anyone else outside the corporate overlords, she had the ability to completely disable the augmented reality filters. Not the partial disconnection allowed to the masses, which still projected a curated version of the world. A total disconnection.

She could see reality as it truly was.

Luca's assumption was that this extraordinary feature stemmed from her work on her thesis, granting her unrestricted access during its preparation. But what struck him most was her awareness of the system's surveillance. She used this privilege sparingly, cautiously. When she was alone—in her office, her apartment, or during her solitary walks—she disabled the filters without hesitation, savoring the unfiltered truth of the world. But as soon as she sensed another person approaching, she reactivated the system. She wasn't naïve; she understood the dangers of being flagged for stepping too far out of bounds.

Yet for all her caution, Luca doubted Sofia fully understood just how exceptionally rare her privilege was. She was one of the few individuals who could truly disappear—leaving no trace of her movements in the system. Most likely, she assumed this feature was a relic of her work, overlooked by the corporation.



But to Luca, it was everything.

Her ability to vanish meant one crucial thing: when accessing the most sensitive parts of the mainframe, Sofia likely moved without augmented reality distortions. No filters, no surveillance. Pure reality.

It was a revelation of monumental importance. If Sofia could navigate the corporate fortress unfiltered, she might hold the key to accessing the documentation he needed. And she likely didn't even realize it.

Luca's heart pounded as he pieced together his plan. He would have to contact her, an act fraught with risk. If she suspected his motives or alerted the authorities, his entire operation could be exposed. But if she agreed to help—or if he could convince her, even unknowingly—she could be the breakthrough he needed to infiltrate the beast.

He stared at his screen, the faint glow illuminating his determined expression.

He needed to take the risk. He needed to contact her.