

BEN

In the Palm of My Hand

Author's Note

F.B.I. WARNING



If you are reading this (which obviously you are), be warned: this book is officially outlawed by the government, and no matter which of the six colonies you are in you will be hunted down and killed. Do not try to flee, we have unimaginable knowledge and will find you! This order complies to I.U. order #1087

- Joe Friscaso

Joe Friscaso, President

Dear Reader,

Please do not panic; this note is no longer effective. Order #1087 was put out of action ten years ago. Just imagine my frustration, though, when I saw this posted on my books! My own bureau, turned against me! Of course, they couldn't actually hurt you until you finished the first chapter, but still! Who's the agency named after anyway? Joe Friscaso? No! It was named after me, and yet, it's my book they're planning to read this and stick stickers all over! All I was trying to do was release to the ignorant public the truth about Rylectronics, but no, they won't let me! Big deal, I think, it's not like you'll kill me, so I'll publish it anyway! Then I saw those confounded stickers on my books! Oh well, I guess it's all over now, so until next time, adieu!

- Tyler Fengat

P.S. That unimaginable knowledge always laugh. All they've got is me, and it's not like I'd tell them anything.

YEAR 2109

I don't know what I was thinking when I joined the secret service. I guess I just wanted to have the experience. In any case, it was there when I found out about the Rylielectronics Project. The International Union had just passed a law stating all power plants and electrical companies were government owned. No one thought much of it, but I knew it's true meaning and I didn't like it. The I.U. had adjusted all the power lines to give power only to government products under the name of Rylielectronics, or products that the government had approved of and put the power allowing chip in. The government said that this was to prevent anyone operating "illegal and potentially dangerous objects." That may have been an additional reason, but the main reason was this: having a Rylielectronics chip means all your data is being broadcasted to Rylie, the main chip. Once completed, Rylie and its bearer will have access to everybody's files. Talk about violation of rights! But the forming of the I.U. voided all other constitutions, and the I.U. Constitution does not include the freedom of privacy. I was unsure of this, and so one afternoon asked.

"Doesn't Rylie violate some right or other?" I asked Commander Scrutin, a large brown-haired man.

"Nope. We made sure of that when we wrote the Constitution," he replied.
"Now, it's time for your cleaning."

A cleaning is when all files relating to you are removed, and all who know you are sworn to secrecy. You replace your name with a letter and number until you retire. You effectively no longer exist. It was a ritual I, for one, did not want to do.

"Must I be cleaned?" I asked Scrutin.

"If you want to live, yes," I took a deep breath.
I was led down the hall to the clearing room, where Captain Hoff
was waiting to take charge of the clearing. "Your parents and all other
relatives or friends have been notified. All left to be removed is your name.
He typed a few figures into the computer. "All files with your name
have been destroyed. Your name exists only in memories. ~~You still now~~
~~exist in my mind. You may go.~~"

I left.

I Hoff was a tall mean mannered man, something about him made me nervous. Maybe it was the way he always frowned, or his large, scrutinizing^{sp.} eyes.