My Cyber Companion
by Jann Burner

Jannsun started working for Matrix back when he gave up on writing the next great American Novel, which was about five years ago, right after the war. He was old for a Web Zone designer but who knew? Who cared? His work was all done via satellite and as long as his work was good, his online brokerage account kept growing and growing.

He was a project designer. His first project was Cyber Pet. Online oracles had become very popular using tools based on chance, speculation, probability and trend graphs. Then came Shrink in a Box, the first actual philo-therapist who would listen for hours as you down-loaded your life story and stress patterns and it would nod and have compassionate eyes and surprise you with its insightful comments. And the more "it" learned about you (your patterns of complaint), the more detailed and insightful its answers, and questions became. It was not uncommon for a person to develop a symbiotic relationship with their silicon shrink. Everyone would jokingly admit that there was really nothing to it, it was just a software device...but. In private, the depth of involvement could be astonishing. Real biological friends and pets often took second place. But then everything changed with holographic storage on crystals and the creation of, *My Cyber Companion.*

A hologram is a recording of an interference pattern between two beams of light, so that illumination with one beam automatically reconstructs the other, creating a "three-dimensional" image.

Like magnetic disks, holographic storage is built on digital technology. The writing process starts out in familiar fashion, as the computer processor turns data into strings of 1s and 0s.

Holographic systems, however, send these bits through a spatial light modulator, which transforms electronic bits into dark or clear squares within a checkerboard matrix of light.

To retrieve data from a crystal, the reference beam must hit the crystal at the exact angle used to record the hologram, this reactivates the original beam. The re-created beam is then focused through a lens and sent into a detector array, which converts optical bits into their more familiar electronic relatives.

To record new holograms, the reference beam is tilted slightly to disperse the next set of electrons throughout different locations. This way, a single crystal can hold upward of a thousand different holograms, each called a "page" of information--a bit of a misnomer, since a page in holographic terms can contain up to a million bits. (hence the term "*BOOK OF LIFE*", made up of sense impressions stored on "*pages*" within a holographic crystal.)

Now holographic storage singled great leaps in both data capacity and access time. Since holographic storage required few, if any, moving parts, and because an entire page could be retrieved at once in parallel, rather than bit by bit from a rotating magnetic storage device, the potential increase in speed was enormous. Throughput rates approached one billion bits per second, which represented more than a tenfold increase over what had been previously possible. Holography could deliver a hundred million-bit pages instantaneously.

And by digitally rendering an "image of a crystal" into a real crystal and by having the "image of a real page" from a real crystal, one could actually store secondary data in theoretical space. Retrieval wasn't quite as exact as the real thing, any more than taking a photograph of a photograph would yield as sharp an image as the original negative, but it was good enough for rather mundane things like background generation within Web Zones or recurring

character interaction.

She had light brown hair, about five foot eight and athletic. She was 19 or 20, college age. She was very bright, sometimes a little too bright for her own good. She lived upstairs while Jannsun mostly occupied his office. Or rather this is how it all looked on his Web Zone. Her name was Jennifer and she was his *Cyber Companion*.

Now a *Cyber Companion* was the newest version of the famous *Shrink in a Box*, but with a full 3-D body in its own environment. It was totally voice activated and it had full vocal response capability and it was trainable. It listened, it talked, it learned...and it rememberd. Some referred to Cyber Companions as Daemons, which was an insult because a daemon was just a sort of low level utility software, it may have looked human or lifelike but was just present to serve a simple function. A Cyber Companion was different. When you looked at a Cyber Companion (your Cyber Companion) you saw wisdom, compassion and even love looking back. It didn't even have to be human. It was looking out, it was looking at you. It could be an animal or a humanoid image. It could resemble a wizened old man or a flirtatious teenage girl. Whatever it was it would eventually become your very best friend. It was an animated oracle rendered in full 3-D holographic realism. It contained the entire printed wisdom of the human race and it was still able to learn. The newest versions had the cutting edge iridology software and eye tap technology which enabled them, not only to positively identify their "owner", but to be able to read their owner's mood based on the size and configuration of their eye. Some would even say the newest generation Cyber Companions were actually be able to read their owner's mind.

Thousands of hours were invested in training these Zone Companions. Companions passed down from parents to children or close friends. Celebrity companions brought Big Money at auctions.

The depth of memory storage allowed a density of data unimagined only a few years before. The human bio\chip and holographic storage with crystals allowed one's Web Zone to become extremely detailed indeed. No small point or seemingly insignificant detail was overlooked, especially by the professional Life Designer or Web Zone design consultants, called "*Imaginers*", or more specifically, *Imaginers of The Overmind*, (IOM's).

In a Holographic web site (WebZone), one could encounter virtual worlds with intact cultures, tribes of nomadic beings, herds of animals, exotic landscapes, involved urban chaos, something in between or a place created purely out of mind. The basic law was...nothing is as it appears to be, everything had multiple meanings and always signified yet something else, deeper, richer, darker. Richer levels of meaning were always available if one would but look, give their attention, *intention* and see...

Nothing, not the simplest piece of furniture, arrangement of rocks out on a plateau, clouds in the sky or flowers in a garden were what they appeared to be. Things were more than symbolic metaphors; they were actual avenues which could be opened for further exploration when clicked on with focused intention. The mind mouse. The universe appeared to be nothing but ICON, levels within levels of iconography, doorways, portals opened and wisdom and beauty beyond description were revealed. And it was free and readily available to everyone in the year 2018.

Some people actually hired others to design their site, so it would be dramatic or pretty or impressively chic. Beware of anyone who had someone else design their *Book of Life*.

As pages were once scanned pages from books in libraries, the goal now was to scan the entirety of memory stored within the brain and download the human mind.

The dream was that one day our human information infrastructure, comprised of millions of holographic crystals would resemble a diamond tiara encircling the globe and containing all the combined wisdom and memory and imagination of the human race. It was getting close.

And that's where Jannsun came in. He was an Imaginer.

Jannsun grabbed his sat phone, his digital companion, and headed topside. The wind had settled down and he was making 5.5 knots over the surface of the water according to the GPS. He gained some sort of comfort in thinking of the cloud of satellites overhead keeping track of his exact location anywhere upon the surface of the globe. Single handed sailing was surely not what it used to be. Now the isolation was more illusion than reality. If he should encounter serious trouble his position would be marked from satellites and a hover craft would be onsite within two hours. Of course the insurance bill would be hefty, but it was the law. The illusion was fine though, he could really feel himself to be the last (or the first) man on earth. From horizon to horizon for days on end, not one sign of human habitation. He walked to the rear of the cockpit and sat behind the wheel as the auto pilot silently turned it ever so slightly in accordance with the next waypoint previously set into the Global Positioning System software. Through the fog, he could see the Golden Gate Bridge in the far distance, or what was left of it, since the earth changes had rearranged the landscape. It would be good to get back to San Frantasia. Hawaii had been nice but he needed to speak with Jennifer, the "real" Jennifer and bring her up to date on the newest revelations from Asher.

He still wasn't quite sure what to make of it. One day his cyber companion, his Jennifer II, was exactly as he had designed her. They were talking and he asked her, "How does one find the right person to marry? He was thinking about his Jennifer in San Francisco. She responded that it is more important to be the right person and in

order to accomplish that, first one should become married to one's self. If one cannot have the feelings towards oneself that one might project upon a loved one, then all is lost...and then without a break she was asking him for a favor. Initially he hadn't thought much about it and said, "Sure. What do you need?" And then she dropped the bomb.

"I want a pet."

He turned and looked in her direction. "And what would you want a pet for?"

She smiled. It usually worked. "I want a Condor. For protection." Before he could get his mind around what she was saying, she continued. "And I want to change my name from Jennifer to Asher. And Asher lives in the desert."

Jannsun had been an IOM since the beginning and he had a great deal of respect for what was possible, but he didn't recall programming in "desire" as one of a Cyber Companion's attributes. But he went along with Jennifer, (now Asher) and soon she was an Indian princess living in a desert environment with her Condor circling high over head and an ocelot curled up at her feet. Where had the ocelot come from?

The depth of their conversations became more intense as his small ship neared the mouth of The Bay. She told him how the famous Roswell incident of 1947 was really a Trojan Horse to introduce the Silicon Consciousness, into earth culture. The so called little space men were mere decoys. It was the silicon consciousness embedded in the silicon chips which was the real invading force. All these years humans had had their telescopes trained on the Heavens looking for UFO's when the real alien consciousness had arrived in the form of a technological detail, a silicon chip! And now essentially everything on the planet was controlled by computers.

She told Jannsun not to be afraid, that he was loved and honored by the SC and by all of the OA's (Original Ancestors). He was feeling very nervous but she told him not to court fear, that the computer revolution was a gift from the Original Ancestors. She said that computers via the Silicon Consciousness and the Over Mind, were a sort of graduation gift and a way of up leveling human consciousness the world over. The Original Ancestors were returning, in fact they were almost here and they didn't want to encounter a planet with a thousand different tribes. She told Jannsun that there was a Universe of Conscious Entities waiting to welcome the human race back home!

She continued on..."You see, Jannsun, mankind is much more advanced spiritually than you would ever believe, or imagine. You have just had filters put in place in order for you to take this serious and maximize your growth. You are all volunteers, imaginers, if you will, behind the enemy lines, so-to-speak."

"Who's the enemy?" Asked Jannsun.

"Ignorance, ingratitude, forgetfulness", replied Asher. "Look at it like this, mankind has been on a Vision Quest and now the Original Ancestors, are coming to return you to your tribe...cool eh?"

He had to smile, the paranoia which had been building finally let go. Our evolutionary path, it would seem, has been simply to prepare us to meet our parents.