



*When Franz Stengel came home, the evening sun bathed his face in a serene light, and the warm summer breeze of the departing day caressed his skin. Thanks to his personal AR filter, it was always summer when he came home, even when he worked overtime and arrived close to midnight on a stormy November night, like this one.*

\*\*\*Zeiss-Uhu-209 cybereyes with image link, recording unit, and low-light vision—1,500 nuyen. Sony Emperor commlink with portable trodenet—750 nuyen. Lusiada-TempoImagi Virtual Weather ARE software—100 nuyen.\*\*\*

*The sec-cams' facial recognition ware at his tenth-floor apartment saw him coming and opened the door, filling the air around him with the salty smell of the ocean and the distant roar of the waves. As the door closed behind him, his ARE settings took over and his other life began. He hung his rain-wear on a rack, took the meal that the auto-cook had prepared for him out of the combo fridge/oven and walked to the window. From here, he could take in the ocean breeze with deep breaths and enjoy a great view over the beach of Isle de Esmeralda, his team's secret hideout. He could make out his virtual girlfriend, Iruka, lying on a deckchair close to the water, bathing in the sun. Apparently she had come home early from her day job and decided to spend some time relaxing.*

\*\*\*Proteus-Enviro 6.01D Wall Space ARE software—50 nuyen. FanPro Ltd. Shadowrun MMORPG—50 nuyen.\*\*\*

*"Okaeri! Okaeri!" The squeaky voice came from one of the cabin's corners, where Fuuridigoru had set up his nest. The tiny baby dragon looked very much like Teclador, a character from the Armalion Saga tridshow. He was blue instead of green, though, could breathe fire, and spoke perfect Japanese—in a very childlike way, of course.*

*"Tadaima! Ich bin zu Hause." Franz noticed that he was still in his Saeder-Krupp wageslave persona. Time to change. He ate his sliced curry soysages with fries, washed them down with a nutrient drink, and sat down in his chair, closing his eyes and putting his body to rest as he logged on. Thanks to his state-of-the-art sleep regulator, he could spend half the night gaming and still be ready for another 14-hour workday tomorrow morning.*

\*\*\*Renraku-Petto-Kawaii Personal Pet ARE software—100 nuyen. Langenscheidt Japanese lingua soft—500 nuyen. Barytech-Wolke7 Sleep Regulator—10,000 nuyen.\*\*\*

*Franz—now Takano Natsunokun, wanted shadowrunner—got up from his chair and stretched his augmented limbs. Fuuridigoru flew through the room and landed on his open palm.*

*"Hoi, Fuuri! Missed me?"*

*"Miss-Miss!"*

*"Right. Well, let's see what the others are up to." Natsunokun grabbed his weapon, took his pet, and left the room in search of adventure: it was just another night running the virtual shadows.*