

# Neuromancer Afterlife

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## Augmentation

"It's not like I'm using. It's like my body's developed this massive drug deficiency."

Flesh, meat, substance. The body, weak, expendable, contemptable. A limiting prison. Yet also a source of pleasure, an outlet, a means to an end. The window to the world. Nothing is as expansive as the mind, but the soul must have a tether, a vessel, a projector, a screen. Or does it ? Are we condemned by what we are born with, our dull, outdated hardware ? Or can we evolve with our technology, up our fitness, expand our presence ? Implants, grafts, wires, power and speed. The ability to redefine the body, streamline it, live beyond physical boundaries. Step one : escape.

"The pill lit his circuits and he rode the rush..."

Endless possibilities. Start with amphetamines, burn through life. Embrace the drug-flesh, chromed bones. Then take it up a level. The implants, enhancers; new organs, new genes, replace flesh with bits of metal, plastic, circuits. Rewrite the human code, rethink evolution. A permanent, plug-in high.

"It's the meat talking, ignore it."

Last stop : the matrix, cyberspace, the shared consensual hallucination, the ultimate trip, the drug of choice. Simstim, life relived, fantasy made real, simulated perfection. The mind has full control, it becomes visible, solid. Augmentation of the mind, of the soul, a higher plane to roam. Infinities of ones and zeros.

"If God made anything better, he kept it for himself."

The future brings escapism. Simulation, virtuality, obsolete physicality, an ignorance of nature. And perhaps a loss of self, decentralization of the psyche. If one becomes less substantial, a mere projection, the meaning of life alters. If parts are replacable, then why not play rough, damn the consequences. What would make us care ? Life within a terminal is bliss, Babylon, any perfection we can program. While we dream, buried within our minds, the world may crumble, the Sprawl will grow like mold, the sky will tune out. We will lose each other, and ourselves. Augmentation, the drug, the diversion, cannot be seen as human. It is another step. Perhaps the final one.

## **Mirroring the Soul**

"dreaming real"

Perception and reality are what you make them, they are as insubstantial as a mirror. They simply reflect what you feed them. The matrix is such a mirror space, it too contains projected identities, digital personas.

"...the tunnel infinity, mirror into mirror..."

Chrome and mirrorshades, reflective surfaces, metaphores of virtuality. Molly, the woman with the mirrored eyes. Her vision a permanent augmented perspective, her visage unreadable. To look upon her is to see only yourself, reflected in hardware. Such a profound statement of identity. No given emotion, no closure, no tears. A constant stream of information, infra-red, digital readout. Don't touch the eye's, you'll leave prints, you'll have an impact. Cold, modified. Put mirror to mirror, and lose yourself in the recursion; what is reflected, what is real ? Endless space, crowded but empty. An image with no substance.

## **Immortality**

"I am the dead, and their land."

With life redefined, so comes a new afterlife. New gods, new demons, new inhabitants. And many different levels, reincarnations. The body can be remade, copied, clones carry on the family line. Cold sleep, cryogenics extending presence, slow wasting. Constructs, down loads of the soul, ghosts. Digital purgatory, brain death.

"For thousands of years men dreamed of pacts with demons. Only now are such things possible."

Omniscient, omnipotent, omnipresent. Demons or gods, they possess power. They are worshipped and feared. The AIs. Religion has advanced with technology, heaven and hell can be interfaced with, the powers addressed. Science has brought back that which was previously done without. Some hint of symbiosis, of the immortal hive. Others fear them like the lords of Hell. To themselves, they just are. They exist, they reside. They are the infinity of angels on the head of a pin, the threads of the matrix. They, It, is All.

"To live here is to live. There is no difference."

Memories are virtual, we relive them without physically manifesting. Perhaps the mind can be reproduced, decanted into a simulated environment. Perhaps what we take for granted every day is such an experience. It is the age old question of who we are. How do we define ourselves ? Bits, bytes ? By the flow of information, by wiring, by memory, data ? In the Virtual age, what do we become ? And where do we go ? Is this salvation ?