Chapter 21

Carl drove the hover vehicle out with both of us sitting in the back. We pulled up to Celeste and she hoped in the driver seat. Carl activated a privacy screen and we went to pick up the fusion reactors. The guys watching us couldn’t keep up and Carl shifted the appearance when we were out of sight. I introduced Luna to Celeste and they started talking while Carl drove us. Celeste was pretty direct asking her about her design and skills. When she was done she asked me why I didn’t add the tantric sex skill since Luna was fully functional. I was kind of shocked and just said Luna would have to work for it.

I had to expand my dimensional pocket using 3000 Aether to have enough space for both of them. One of our tails had found us but we just took off. I had Carl go stealth and we headed for the Dread Trent Dungeon. I wanted to pick up a few shadow cloaks and as far as I knew we were the only people who know of the dungeon.

We entered the dungeon and got our teamwork down. Luna was the tank. Me and Celeste were ranged and melee support. The first Shadow Cloak went to Luna. The passive charm, blend with shadows would work for her. After the clear we rested in the tent. It was odd eating with Luna knowing she didn’t need to. She ate a little food to be social.

We were going to collect 3 more cloaks. So we had a day and half left at dungeon. The time passed quickly. I had a good amount of loot from the 4 clears. We didn’t have any Ballen credits to reenter the terminal. The plan was to drop everything off at the cave and go hit the Fiery Wyvern Dungeon.

I was frigging awesome crossing the ocean at 480 kph. The clear force screen allowed us to stand up and look out with out any wind against us. We slowed to 300kph when we go to land. The trip took 4 hours but was really fun.

At the cave everyone was admiring the new ride. I gave Vlad the location of my bike outside of town. I unloaded the water purifiers and fusion reactors. All the loot went to the storage room. I handed the bot and canisters to the orc boys to sound proof all the rooms. I handed out the dungeon stones. Cael handed me 60,000 Ballen credits from the dungeon raids. Wow they must have been doing well for just 3 days. Luna was getting majorly macked on by Red. I didn’t have the heart to tell him she was an android with complete loyalty to me. Celeste spent the day hooking up the water purifier to the cave system.

I got bored and started excavating a tunnel in our room toward the other side of the mountain. I hit a water drainage area and spent some time sealing it off.

At diner everyone gave updates. Meranda got all 4 repair robots working and was on track to finish work in 4 months, 2 months ahead of schedule. Vlad, Red and Cael were getting 3 dungeon clears a day and were getting ingredients to Silia to brew a potion that was selling well in town. Apparently they had found a potion recipe on one of the scrolls an all the ingredients were available in the dungeon. The potion instantly restored 50 aether, 50 health and 50 stamina with a 20 minute cooldown. Silia was getting a 25% of the profits. But they could get enough ingredients to brew 15 potions each dungeon run and they sold for 200 credits each to Bammi since they had a 400 day shelf life. The boys sword skill was at 8 and they said they were ready for dungeon running, Meranda said no, when they were 17 they could, two years away. Cael had registered the ship as salvage and gotten it registered. We had to bring it to a Ballen port or space station for a scan to get the official paperwork though. He also had found a consignment cargo. It was from his girlfriends village. No insurance required. It was 40 tons of meat, refrigeration included. They had a distributor on the station and they would handle getting the refrigeration back to this planet. We would get 50,000 credits from the delivery. Excellent! I told everyone I added another companion, Luna, who was our pilot. She was an android and very good at flying. Red deflated. I told everyone they could get a companion as well if their Charisma hit 50. Everyone was paging through their character sheets quickly disappointed. Most had between 9 and 15 charisma and no skills to raise it.

On my turn I indicated a successful trip to the SYSTEM terminal and our new hover car which could get us back and forth without having to rent a shuttle. I handed out the shadow cloaks to the Meranda and her brothers. It was the symbol of our crew and the ship now had a new name, Shadow Phoenix. Everyone seemed to like it. It sounded like a pirate ship name but who cares. Cael updated his notes and said he would get the name registered. I had conferred with Celeste and I was going to the Beetle Rider dungeon next. I was going with Celeste, Luna and Red. After we hit the dungeon we would be headed to the Fiery Wyvern dungeon then return here. I would then go with Celeste back to Sand Bastion to the SYSTEM terminal. My goal was to purchase the food synthesizer and alcohol dispensary and furniture for the common lounge and passenger quarters.

We drank well into the night. I retired with Celeste, while we were in the middle of having sex Luna walked into the room. Celeste invited her to the bed. It was my first ever threesome and I must say it was fantastic. Most of it was Celeste explaining to Luna what to do but it was cute.

In the morning I loaded up Carl with the tent and put a make shift seat in the trunk for Luna. Celeste was going to practice her driving and I sat in the back with Red focused on practicing psionics.

The ratmen, scorpions and ambushes were not as bad with two extra people with us. Red had a sense person ability that pretty much ended all ambushes. He also had a group psionic shield so the beetles attack washed over us. Without the stun the rider didn’t get the jump on me and Luna. The dungeon had scaled the health of the boss monsters but they were no challenge. I hoped this victory would erase the mental scar I had from the first time. We had been hoping to get another set of ying yang short swords for Luna, the main reason we had cleared the dungeon. We only got a single short sword, *short sword, +10 agility, +10 speed, charm Teflon blade*. The charm just kept the blade always clean. Well it was decided we would clear the dungeon again tomorrow to hopefully get a second short sword for Luna before going to the Fiery Wyvern dungeon. I would hit level 10 tomorrow morning in the dungeon so I was excited. We behaved ourselves with Red present, Luna guarded outside the tent since the insects didn’t bother her.

In the ratman city the next morning I hit level 10. We had to stop so I could update my sheets. I looked at my skill scrolls and decided to learn metal magic. The associated stat for the skill was Constitution. I fist pumped, I could use the health. I remembered the potion scroll. Health Pool fortifier. It had 4 ingredients. One of the was purified water which I planned to substitute with aether water. I set up my botany skill to highlight them if I got close. Looking at my skills my mind shield skill had hit level 7 and I had a boon selection coming. I looked at the two options. The first was to cause a rebound to a single attack sending back the attack back at 50% power. The other option was ‘confused thoughts’ it gave people trying to read my mind a jumble of information. I selected the rebound boon grinning to myself for the next practice session with red. Looking at my spells I had a number of upgrades coming.

My heal other spell hit level 7 and the two upgrades at level 7 I increased the health healed by 18 points and the spells cost by 12 aether. I hadn’t used my advanced spell yet as the aether cost was too high and we never sustained serious injurues. For hitting level 11 for create water I increased the volume to 8 liters from 7 liters. For aether respiration I added to the efficacy, giving me 15 seconds per 1 aether. With other bonuses I got about 20 seconds per 1 aether. That was all the time I had. The group was impatient as I had been at it for an hour. I planned to finish after the dungeon clear.

We were shocked when the final boss had two mini bosses with it, lessor beetles with riders. It went ugly. Both lessor beetle riders targeted me and attacked me out of range of Red’s protection from psionics, killing my ability to use aether. Then both the riders launhed at me and the beetles attacked Red’s back. Both riders were very fast but I had improved. I hit and sliced the first one up pretty bad. The other bastard got me for 240 health with a backstab. Shit. I pulled my aether pistol and killed the injured rider but taking another hit in the back for 270. I used my heal ability from the sword and faced the opponent. Red was having a lot of problems with the two mini boss beetles. I could easily have finished my other rider but instead rushed one of the beetles and pulled it off Red. I got a stab to my back again losing 250 health. Shit. I tried to get both in front of me. Red was doing much better against one beetle. Celeste had finally dispatched the main rider. I breathed a sigh of relief. I took another 200 health damage from 2 hits before the numbers game turned completely in our favor for the win. I got the creepy feeling this dungeon was intelligent and challenging us. I decided never to come back.

The loot was great. We got the paired short swords of flame and ice. *Short sword of flame, +10 strength, +10 constitution, adds flame damage on hit, Short sword of ice, +10 agility, +10 speed, adds ice damage on hit*. They were paired and like Celeste’s ying yang set only took one magic slot. They also gave +25% health, +25% stamina regeneration when both were equipped. Luna equipped them and tested them on me. The flame and ice damage went through the armor. It did around 50 points of extra damage. We put the other short sword into my storage for sale.

We rested in the tent and I finished my spell upgrades. Personal force shield spell I increased the toughness by 40% over reducing the aether cost. The wind blades had two upgrades. The first one I added a fourth blade to the attack and the second upgrade I added 24% to the damage. The last spell upgrade I had was for replenish aether core, I increased the transfer rate to 6 aether per second, doubling the rate. After a short rest we packed and had Carl drive us to the Fiery Wyvern dungeon while we ate and rested.

The dungeon was in an ocean side cliff about 10 meters above the surf. We found some stairs leading up from the beach. The first level had goblins in a ice covered forest. The loot was terrible, a few coppers and a crappy bow and arrows. The boss was a larger goblin mage who summoned ice lances. Red managed to stun him while we brought him down. He dropped a magic scroll for the tier 1 spell ice dart and a dozen coppers. The next level was a swamp at night with a moon for light. The swamp had snakes everywhere. We found they dropped the poison sacks at around 50% for the quest. Because of this we had to hunt as many as possible. Six hours later I had 47 poison sacks and we just had the boss left. It was a large ass snake with wings. When we attacked it 12 marsh serpents joined out of nowhere, 3 attacking each of us. Celeste and Luna cut through their opponents with ease and occupied the feathered serpent. Me and Red took a minute to get oriented. Red got poisoned and I used haste to dispatch mine shortly after the girls. I helped Red and by the time we finished his 3 the girls had dropped the boss. I got the fangs for one of the other quests. The loot was a pair of silver coins, the poison sacks and crappy magic dagger which Red wanted. Level 3 was a mine. There were ore deposits here we could mine. The monsters were corrupted dwarves. I sent everyone an invite to the quest. To get credit you had to get the killing blow. My excavate spell was able to instantly mine an ore deposit. The ore was silver and really only valuable to the SYSTEM terminal. I collected what I could. For the quest, Celeste finished first, then me, then Red. Luna couldn’t get quests.

*Quest Completed (I): Kill 20 Corrupted Dwarves, 2500 experience, +3 stat points*

I added my free stat points to speed bringing me to 13. Watching Celeste and Luna dance and move with lightning grace made me envious. The boss was the dwarf lord. He had seven attendants. Celeste cast lightning storm killing 5 attendants instantly and making the fight easy. The loot was silver coins and a magic battle axe tagged for sale.

Level 4 of this dungeon was a plane of ice. Walking on it constantly had the cracking sound of ice making you think you could fall in at any time. The monsters came up through the ice. Alligators with shorter heads than normal. The had good armor and even the girls had trouble doing damage. Fortunately they came one at a time and took the four of us 2 minutes to take down. After a while we found the belly was a weak point but getting the gators. The boss was a gator bigger than an elephant. It had really strong armor and if we hadn’t learned the belly weakness we might have had problems. We just had to flank it and rush in and back, striking the side of the belly. The loot was a 300 point aether crystal, 2 minor healing potions (100 health), and a magic steel helm. Both potions went to Red.

The 5th level was a lava field. The monsters were fire ants that emerged from lava pools in groups of 3 to 7. We switched to just ranged engagement as the ants bit could sever body parts. Luna lost her arm protecting Red from three ants. Fortunately the regen function reattached her arm after the fight. There were so many ants and they dropped mandibles and thorax plating. The boss was a frigging dragon. It was huge, maybe 20 meters long including the tail. It had a breath attack similar to my flame spear except it exploded on contact. That first attack threw all of us. I took 166 damage. I rolled caste haste and turned my aether pistol at the high setting on it. My first blast tore a chunk out of the flesh from the scaly black hide. Soon we were all bombarding the beast. It flapped its wings once and bowled through me and Red, clawing me as it past. I took 350 damage. As it was turning I used my sword ability an healed. The beast then breathed again hitting me and throwing me in the explosion. 197 damage and my new armor was looking terrible. I prepped and cast wind blades as it came in range. The beast was looking bad, bleeding from dozens of hits and definitely slowing. I moved to keep distance but it obviously hated me and came at me again. Instead a claw I got the bite and massive fangs punctured my suit, my shields having shattered. 478 damage. It lashed its head throwing from its mouth figuring I was probably dead. 58 damage. I morphed into myself getting a full health restore. Before the wyvern could attack again it finally fell.

I cast clean clothes to restore my armor a few times. Red was already at the loot and sounding giddy. The wyvern head was 1.5 meters in size. I pushed it into my space. There were 32 gold gold. Each on was worth 200 SYSTEM credits. There was a scroll that had a drawing of the wyvern and locked very detailed. *Red Wyvern Tattoo, +20% fire resistance, +10% damage with fire magic and pyro psionics*. Red said tattoos were a form of magic runes. Anyone could use them as long as they had the skin space. Red wanted the tattoo so he got it. He put the scroll on his bare chest and the tattoo transferred to his flesh, scroll crumbling to dust. There was a 1000 point aether crystal as well. We used our stones to return to the surface. I wasn’t sure if Luna was going to be able to activate it but she had no issue.

We tented and checked the first level and found the dungeon respawn was about 22 hours. Red wanted to run it again hoping for another tattoo. I just wanted to clear the 3rd level for poison sacs. I didn’t want to deal with the wyvern again. In the end I agreed to do the wyvern again.

The boss from the first floor dropped the tier 1 scroll for Self Illusion. It was an air spell so I could learn it. I decided to hold it for now as it had the morph ring. The swamp boss gave a minor magic spear for loot. More importantly I brought my total poison sacks to 108. The dwarf lord dropped a large two handed sword with ok stats. The ice floor was a little harder. Red and me got dragged under the ice. With my water movement and aether respiration spells it wasn’t a big deal, Red had a little trouble before I saved him. I had to recast my dimension space as it was full so we ended up taking a break. We were 9 hours into the dive with one level to go.

The fire ants were easier and the group’s teamwork was getting pretty good. I also decided on my next companion I would build a support healer as it seemed I was always the first person to tack damage. We spread out to attack the wyvern. Of course it targeted me but I ended up kiting it while the others took it down. The battle was definitely smoother and the only damage I took was concussion damage from the breath impacts. The loot was good. A scroll with a fire ant, *lava ant tattoo, +15 strength*, +15 *constitution*. Red got the tattoo on his back. If all tattoos were this size then he could probably get one wrapped around each thigh to finish his collection. I collected 30 gold, a 1000 point aether crystal and a small black note book.

The note book triggered a quest.

*Quest: Return the mysterious notebook to owner, Reward: 5000 experience, +2 skill points, +2 luck*

The notebook was either in code or another language. I tried to use the pad to translate but it failed. Interesting. The pad did give the location of the owner. It was near the south pole, about 1400 miles away. Also I couldn’t share the quest and only I could get the rewards on completion.

I told Red I was going to drop him off at the bat cave and go to the south pole then to Sand Bastion. He was disappointed as he was making significant gains.

During the trip back Red was a little more aggressive in our psionic practice. He had wanted to run the Wyvern dungeon again and I had turned him down. At the bat cave we had a meal and told of our adventures. Vlad handed over just 5,000 Ballen credits. Vlad and Cael had been using some credits to upgrade the facilities. I left with Luna and Celeste after a few hours deciding to sleep in Carl on the way. Carl took over the driving and we slept in the back seat in a tangled mass of naked limbs.

Laying under the bodies I opened my sheets. I thought did Luna need to sleep? Not important. The sheets, no big gains in skills. I had hit level 7 in Sense Psionics skill. Looking at my boon options, one would highlight people in a glow who were actively using psionics, the other option would identify the psionic skill I was sensing. I chose the second option. On spells my personal dimensional pocket spell hit level 23. It was great news as I would get two upgrades. At level 7 and 23 the choices were usually a little better than normal as well. I opened the upgrade with anticipation.

*Personal Dimensional Space Spell Tailoring, Level 23, Tier 10*

* *“Size Increase” – increase base cast from1 cubic meter to 3 cubic meters*
* *“Stacking Improvement” – increase stacking to 10*
* *“Instant Storage” – items can be added instantly with no cool down*

It was my most heavily used and useful spell. Tripling the storage was attractive. Improving the stacking from 3 to 10 would increase the storage as well especially since a was a pack mule right now as we were taking pretty much every drop. Even with a few second delay in adding items I was ok with it. I choose to increase the base size because it was a 300% increase. The second upgrade options displayed.

*Personal Dimensional Space Spell Tailoring, Level 23, Tier 10*

* *“Size Increase” – increase size of space by 40%*
* *“Stacking Improvement” – increase stacking to 10*
* *“Casting Efficiency” – decrease casting cost by 11 aether*

The stacking option was still there. The aether improvement would bring the cast cost down to 41. Only a 20% or so increase but I had slowly chipped away at the casting cost on upgrades. I felt it was the best path.

We arrived at the dot on the map. It was on an ice shelf with nothing here.