Chapter 11

On waking, Violet went riding and I went with her to add more soil through the portal. While the machines were working I decided to get an electronic dirt bike from the system. It was fun for an hour then I got a mountain bike, and the peddling was fun to kill another hour. My riding trails were well-groomed and easy to ride on. Flux let me know the truck with all the trees I ordered was coming up the hill…the raccoon sentries at work.

The driver was shocked by the paved road and the majestic view from my house. He asked what I did, and I told him I was a problem solver. He unloaded the trees, and I had 720 trees between 4 and 7 feet tall. After the truck left, I got to the terminal and bought six human bots to do the planting. The twins just wouldn’t have the time to do all this work. Flux controlled them, and I bought 800 cubic yards of Aether earth. I got it really cheap on the auction site. Each tree would be planted in one cubic yard to jump-start its growth. I bought a special bot to dig the holes and transport the soil. This bot could also be fitted with a 500-gallon water tank to water the trees if needed.

I left the bikes in the garage and met up with Violet who was at the stables grooming the horses. A little while later the girls were back from school. We talked over the pizza they had picked up on the way home. Amelia was very happy with the house trailer and work. After explaining everything she was a little in disbelief. It took the bots, mahcines and 6 raccoons doing a synchronized dance to convince her. Bringing her to the terminal was the final step. She wasn’t sure about the stat upgrades but the twins convinced her. I knocked her out. I healed her maladies as well. Her stats looked like the following after adding 5 intellect, 3 stamina and 2 speed.

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|  | **Amelia** |
| **Strength** | **32** |
| **Constitution** | **52** |
| **Stamina** | **69** |
| **Agility** | **55** |
| **Speed** | **61** |
| **Intellect** | **40** |
| **Aether** | **0** |
| **Channeling** | **0** |
| **Charisma** | **33** |

I had made all the choices focusing on her schooling and competition. Amelia was a C student in school. She was doing better since moving here but this should give her a leg up. The physical speed and stamina were selfish on my part to improve the team. It was time for me and Violet to get back to missions although Violet seemed to like this relaxed and pampered lifestyle. After getting a solid night’s sleep we went to the terminal. I went to missions.

***COMPLETED: Travel to the Elven city of Ahrenhal. Reward: +1 stat point, +1 skill point, +1 anchor point, 500 credits***

***BONUS: +2 skill points***

The stat point went to speed, and I was able to raise speed by two more points before the system stopped further increases. I raised Dodge to Beginner-8 in order to improve defense and take less of a beating sparring with Violet. We talked for a bit about where to use the new anchor point. Violet wanted to venture to one of the Under Earth trading cities. I said she could pick one out and we would try to make it there. We looked at missions to see if one fit with the goal. Violet found a mission she wanted us to do.

***Trade 1200 gallons of Beer to the Blue Goat Inn in the city of Terramore. Reward: +1 Mercantile Skill, +2 ability points, 2000 credits***

Terramore was a famous city of over 6 million people. It was governed by the Ashi, a powerful race of djinn. The city traded with both inner and outer shell cities. It was a 2100-mile trek to the entrance…then a 1350-mile corkscrew descent. Quite the sojourn. We would leave after the cross-country pool party.

What to do in the interim? Violet said Flux could find me good deeds to do on my Earth. We returned home and sparred for a bit. I got my ass handed to me for 3 hours. The girls returned and I got to see their weapon skills that Violet had been training with them. Celeste used a long sword and switched between one and two hands. Olivia fought with a round shield and short sword. To make things fair I sparred with both at the same time. Amelia showed up, she was late due to feeding the horses. Violet showed her the weapons rack and eventually she decided to learn the scimitar to start. Well, first conditioning directed by Violet.

Resting, I talked with the twins. Their high school in Cascade only had 105 students, it was hard to find a good boyfriend. I asked about what sports they were going to play in the winter and spring. They asked me what sports I played. I told them football, wrestling and track in high school and football and rowing in college. They asked about rowing and I told them it was my best experience in college. They wanted to row then. Well, Cascade was on a lake. I got with Flux and found 2.9 acres of waterfront on the southern end of the lake for $220k. It had a crappy cabin on it and 80 yards of beach front. I told him to buy it. I excused myself from training and went to design a boathouse!

I got some great holographic design software with an AI. I designed a 6 bay two-story boathouse. It had room for 20 eights, 20 fours, 20 pair/doubles and 20 singles. It had a 60 erg room, a 16 station rowing tank, a large weight room, a trainers room, two large locker rooms and 9 small offices. The piece de la resistance was on the second floor; a full service kitchen, a massive event room with seating for up to 240, and it extended to an open-air balcony. The building was designed for an elite college team. I would need 4 coaches, 1 strength coach, 1 athletic trainer and a director. It seemed overkill for a resort town with a population of 1100 people. I had a lot of cash though.

I had Flux start the ordering everything including ordering 6 wakeless launches, 60 ergs, docks, 10 olympic eights, 12 olympic fours, 4 olympic quads, 12 olympic pair/doubles, and 12 olympic singles. Now I need to set up an endowment….$300k operating, $700k for salary and benefits…so $25 million at a 4% return. I could build the majority of the boathouse with puffcrete greatly accelerating the build. It would need to be ready by March for the twins. I was getting excited, I rowed three years in college and coached rowing for a few years while I had been graduate school. I had loved the sport and this was my chance to bring it to Idaho.

The next day I was in Cascade looking at the property and signing papers and dropping of blueprints. The boathouse was going to be a huge building but would have wood paneling on the outside. It looked great in the holographic displays. The town was quaint. I started getting ideas.

I could build a luxury hotel with 100 rooms…that would employ 15 more people. I could build a high end restaurant as well…12 more people. A small luxury 26 unit apartment complex…3 more employees. A massive community gym with pool and rock climbing wall…11 more employees. A nice sports bar…7 employees. An ice cream shoppe/coffee shop…5 employees. A flower shop…3 employees. A massive new book/used book store/coffee shop…13 employees. Two different micro breweries…8 employees. Bowling alley…5 employees. A day spa…7 employees. Small hospital…35 employees. Bike shop and rental…5 employees. An outdoor store for fishing and backpacking…7 employees. I could buy out the golf course and it would another 14 employees. So over 150 employees.

I would need $400 million endowment to pay all the salaries. Construction costs would be a lot. I would focus on buying and renovating buildings. I had enough cash to get started. I bought an advanced android that I named Tom and had all the legal, architectural and construction knowledge he needed. He would be my foreman to hire construction workers with help from Flux. Tom looked human and acted human so I hoped things would go smoothly.

Getting with the holo build application and Flux I had a map of the town and began buying and planning layouts. I planned to add 46 cabins up in the hills around the town. They would be luxury log cabins with a master suite and two additional bedrooms. I expected some resistance from the people. I started by having Flux create a corporation, Cascade Adventures. Over the next week and a half I put $160 million in cash to buying land and bringing in workers. Just before the cross-country meet I had three puffcrete machines build the boathouse overnight. The interior finishing would take a few months. The meet went well and our team came in second of the 3 teams participating. The twins were 7th and 8th, Amelia was 2nd. They had their final meet in three weeks, the state championships which I hoped to be there for but doubted it.

The pool party went well, and the team went horseback riding, swimming and ate a lot of food. The parents for most of the kids came as well and I had to field a lot of questions. The big gossip was about the all the construction staring in Cascade. When I told them I was behind it things got interesting. The rumor mill was going to be interesting and I told them I was trying to improve the town. I learned there was an interesting thing on the ballot in the upcoming November election. There was a question on whether to contract out the police and fire departments. Apparently, it was a hot topic. The move would save $200k annually for two years but then it would probably cost more. I thought about it and I could make a bid if the prop passed… After the pool party I tried to start the hiring of employees.

Flux started the process. Minimum salary was $50k and went up to $88k not including the hospital staffing. It included health and dental and a flat $5000 annual 401k contribution. I wanted to bring in as many young adults with kids as possible to the town so Flux prioritized families. The hospital was more tricky. There was already a small hospital/clinic in town. I would have to hire the entire group there…so my hospital would have 50 employees...I decided just to build and entire small modern hospital for now. I used all the cashed in the stock certificates from the drug compound to start the endowment for all the salaries, $48 million. I left Tom my truck and $25 million in cash to keep things going. Violet and I left for the mission. Since I had an anchor we just needed to get to the city. I bought a cheap two-seater hoverbike, I was not going to risk my tricked out bike again.