Chapter 5

After some research, I had a katana and watizashi chosen. I had them made from a space alloy in the store. I played with them for a bit before getting a slightly longer katana. Then as I was on the operator screen and found my physical appearance. I could change my body. I started by increasing my height to 6’3”, adding just over 3 inches to my height. The pain was massive and I was told my constitution and stamina had been reduced by 1 and agility by 3. Damn. I lightened my dark brown eyes to more of a light brown. Lastly, I increased my penis to match my height, adding 2 inches in length and a slight increase in girth, making me just over 9 inches. The change didn’t affect my stats, just my confidence in adding a third sword. I spent another twenty minutes removing birthmarks and hair below the waist. I was getting ready to impress my new instructor.

With my increased height and limbs, I spent time getting used to my new dimensions. Maybe it wasn’t such a great idea to add so much height. As I was preparing to leave I saw the girls in my garden. Well, what was left of it. It was overgrown and a quarter of it had been dug up by animals. I went down and found them picking beans. I gave them each a survival knife and Celeste my backup Glock after confirming they knew how to use it. I said the wildlife was crazy around here and to be careful. If they left before I got back just leave the gun in the trailer. If anyone came by just tell them that they were renting the trailer and I would be back later. They could help themselves to anything in the garden.

I returned to Stormheart with my swords and was excited to begin my lessons. Violet took the two gold coins, inspected the blades, then watched me swing them, then she had me start lifting weights and swinging weighted swords for four hours! She made comments correcting my movements and asked if I had been shorter yesterday. I said I had been in disguise. During breaks, I drank lots of water as I was sweat-soaked. I used my healing hands to heal my muscles but it didn’t help with my stamina. After a second four-hour session Violet said I needed to develop ambidexterity to dual wield my chosen blades. We would start tomorrow with stretches and learning the dual control.

Back in the terminal, I found that there was a skill called ambidextrous. There was also an ability called dual-neurality. Which allowed one to divide their thought process, controlling each arm independently. The ability was more impressive that you could also dual-cast spells! Ok, I needed 10,000 credits to unlock an ability. I went to my list of books. 500 gold for the portal magic. 200 gold for *Basics of Lightning Magic*, 150 gold each for *Banishing Lessor Demonkind* and *Complexities of Overcoming Ancient Glyphs*. I went and sold the books and got a list of five more books. Returning to the terminal I converted the gold to credits and unlocked *Dual-Neurality*. 100 more credits got me the skill at neophyte-1. I got a few hours of sleep before going back to training under Violet.

It took most of the day to get comfortable with the new ability. Although I thought I had made little progress Violet said she was impressed. She said we would start sparring during the second half of the day forward. I returned, ate, and slept. I fast walked back to my training. I went through 5 hours of conditioning and finally, we got to training with weighted wooden swords. Although I got my ass kicked I learned a lot in five hours. Returning to the terminal I found Long Blades at Neophyte-2, Parry at Neophyte-1, Dual Neurality to Neophyte-2, and Dodge had advanced to Beginner-2! In the house, I prepared dinner, pasta bolognese. It was actually early afternoon and looking at the garden from the balcony while eating a bowl of meat sauce the garden looked better. Then I thought the girls probably didn’t have much money. They were pretty thin and around 5-9. I found them in the house trailer and offered them $200 a week each to do landscaping. Clearing and transplanting saplings upslope and downslope. It was hard work and I said they could also borrow the truck to get me groceries in town, both girls had their licenses, and I gave them $400 cash for the first week of work. I gave them my spare key. I slept better feeling I had done something good.

Waking I returned to my instructor. She was still doing her sword form and I watched. When she finished we started my training. Six hours of conditioning followed by six hours of directed sparring. Her direction for me was getting better and I felt I was improving faster. After we finished the day I returned home and gorged on pizza after cooking two DiGorno pepperoni. After a shower, I was lying in bed and began to think of how I could earn some money in my world without drawing attention to me.

Flux suggested he could play the stock market. He estimated he could generate 40-60% growth per quarter. I transferred $100k to an account he could use. I also needed to get a few thousand in cash to pay the girls. Eventually, I fell asleep. I was late to practice the next day and Violet made me do intense training for the next 12 hours. The other students gave me pitying looks. The sparring was particularly brutal and she broke my arm twice. Now that she knew I could heal myself she got even more brutal. I was glad the day was done and dragged myself home.

I healed myself in the terminal and I made a trip to Boise the next day, getting $5k in cash and a load of groceries. When I got back I found something called Aether fertilizer in the terminal. It gave plants a 1200% growth boost for 30 days. It was cheap at 50 credits a ton. I got ten tons and had my bots put the soil in a pile on the plateau. I let the girls know it should be used on the transplanted trees and shrubs. They asked how it got here and I just said it was a special delivery.

I was reluctant to return to training…well getting beaten like a dog. I was only 30 minutes late and was worried Violet was still angry with me. Eventually, I just conceded to take my beating. Violet was not there. But her father talked to me. He had scolded her last night for how she treated me. He explained she had thought I disrespected her because she was a woman. And he had explained what he saw…a teacher getting angry at a student and beating him to near death. I spent the day training with Violet’s father, 8 hours of precise training and correction. I thanked him and said I would return for my final day of training tomorrow.

When I got back I saw my long blade skill had hit Neophyte-5 but I didn’t turn in the mission. I would do so after my last day of training. It had only taken me a week instead of three so I was very happy. Celeste and Olivia had made good progress. I sat on my balcony and was sipping a beer. I could probably build a nice pool here. But the girls were here so I didn’t want to bring out the bots. With Flux I designed the pool and hot tub. It would be under my balcony and take up half the current garden. I would wait till the girls left. I showered and slept. After a big breakfast, I returned to the sword school. Violet was there and I ended up sparring with the other students all day getting lots of valuable feedback from my partners and Violet. The students were all very good but I held my own with half of them mainly due to my high agility.

At the end of the training, I thanked Violet and asked her to dinner. She accepted and after the meal I got a room at a good inn. I then had my first sex in over two years. Violet was 27 and extremely strong and it was a fight for dominance in bed. I was happy my extended member worked well and we both got a lot of sweaty stress relief out. After three rounds of sex, we started talking. Violet grew up in the school. Her elder brother was the personal bodyguard of the second prince. That was her goal, to spend 10-20 years as a bodyguard and then retire. How much did a bodyguard make? 200 gold a year plus expenses was typical. Would she be interested in being my bodyguard?

She had to think about it. There was no prestige and the princess was going to be 13 in five months and her father was lobbying for her. I told her to think about it. I would be traveling to the world sphere and wanted someone I could trust…and the sex was good too. In the morning I told her I would be back tomorrow to get her answer. I went to the terminal and turned in the quest.

***Learn the Long Blades skill to Neophyte-5 from a sword master in Stormheart. Reward: +3 long blades skill, +1 parry skill, +2 strength, +2 agility, +1 stamina, +1 skill slot***

***BONUS: +1 long blades skill, +1 parry skill, +1 stamina***

The upgrades were euphoric. I checked a summary of my skills.

8/12 slots used, 6 skill points available

Ballistic Hand Guns Beginner-3

Ballistic Rifles Beginner-1

Short Blades Beginner-1

Martial Combat Beginner-1

Dodge Beginner-2

Mercantile Beginner-2

Long Blades Beginner-5

Parry Neophyte-5

By my estimate, Violet had reached Skilled in Long Blades and Parry. She had a mix of other melee skills too. I changed into comfortable clothes after a shower. I was sipping coffee in the kitchen when the girls knocked. They sat down at the table and we started talking. They wanted to live here and go to their high school and graduate. They had told their mom they got a part-time job and an apartment. Their mother was happy to not have to support them. Their high school was an hour's drive away.

They didn’t have a car. They said they could get a used car for $2k and were hoping for an advance on pay. Five weeks' pay. School started in two weeks and how were they going to work 20 hours a week on top of school? They said they could on the weekend. I said I would think about it. How the hell did I become their foster father? Hmm maybe a could put in the pool earlier and build a poolhouse they could sleep in instead of the trailer. I need to think about it and would sleep on it.