Chapter 17

My next morning I was at the clinic curing disease. After a large breakfast I played with the older kids who were almost 5 now, time was passing quickly. I then spent the day with the ship women making coins. Amelia had ordered 70,000 coins in certain denominations. The girls had gotten good with the process and were able to work and gossip at great speed. Before dinner I had Arisa do the counts and deliver the coins to Avalon bank. I should have a golem accompany her in the future for security. The meal was spaghetti and meatballs and it was close to my expectations. I spent the evening making light stones and after a shower went to bed alone. Carina and Ella were busy with the babies. It was fine I could check my magic progress and read Riona’s books.

My thermal stone hit level 10 and I choose the evolution to double the effective time. The light stone was at 99/100 to level 10 so I made six more light stones and it advanced. My choices were good and I narrowed it down to adding an off/on rune or adjusting the brightness between 100 lumens to 4000 lumens at creation. After mulling it for a long time I selected the second option. The only draw back was at 4000 lumens the stone lasted half the time, about 29 years. But at 100 lumens it last over 1000 years. It was also a way to add new products for sale. I moved and read the updated magic books. I found a magic alchemy pamphlet as well. It had 6 potions on it. Nothing exceptional, all cure and healing potions of minor power. It would grow over time. I had 5 spell points, 2 points from reaching the healing spell. I was having second thoughts though. Maybe a should learn something else like invisibility or fireball. War was coming. I paged through the spells but I decided I didn’t want to commit at this time. I fell asleep.

In the morning I had blueberry pancakes with sausage. I had a list of requests for my magic. I looked it over and decided I would spend the day growing trees. It would take 3 weeks before my golems were done moving the horde. I went to Undermountain warehouse. It was pretty full already. I marked the copper out and some silver as well to go to the metalsmiths in town. I found crates of raw gems too. I was a bit surprised. Lots of emeralds. I hadn’t made the four new golems swords yet. I decided each should dual wield swords and I would make the swords in colored pairs, I had red, green, blue, yellow and black covered. For the 6th I would try to do purple or orange if I could get enough material.

I reached the fields and started growing trees and vines all day. Someone brought me lunch a BLT with lemonade. I asked for two more sandwiches. I was glad my culinary preferences were being learned. It was sunset when I returned to the tower and a much needed shower. I was alone again for dinner, a chicken pot pie. The kids came in after and we played for an hour. That evening I was asked if I would be making coins…no. I went to sleep. The next two weeks I worked the fields growing more trees and making coins and light stones. The golems were making their last trip to the warehouse and would be back in three days.

It was time to build the main tower. I needed the structure to serve as the last defense for my family but I also planned to confront the English and Spanish long before they reach Avalon. I was talking with my two architects who had drawn up the plans. I wanted to spend the next 6 months working on the structure with my six golems, using about 80% of my daily magic for the project.

It was good living a normal life for a bit. I enjoyed walking through the city, and visiting the shops. The city was clean and everyone was active. Amelia said Avalon was approaching 3000 residents which included 400 Indians. Pendragon was over 500 and Camelot would reach 7000 soon. She wasn’t sure on Lancelot and Excalibur but from reports both were over 300. She estimated there was another 1500 farmers supplying food to the growing cities. I remembered my tropic seeds I built a greenhouse for the exotic plants from South America. The greenhouse had 20 rubber trees and 60 various fruit trees. This accelerated our canning efforts.

One unusual thing in my 6 months of construction was two assassination attempts. Maya had caught them before they acted. She was pretty good at reading minds now. One was a priest that was trying to kill the children who had magic and the other was after me specifically. Amelia’s daughter, Daphne, was moved to the tower from the mayor residence and guards were put around the property. The guards were rangers that were loyal based on Maya’s scans and soon we had 38 men and 4 women guarding the wall. The new group was now called the Knights of the Magi or Magi Knights. I made all personal molded half plate stone armor that just 1/16th thick for them. It was hardened and could easily take a musket ball. It covered the under body with the exception of the face and hands. The helm I modeled after the Spartan helm from the movie 300. The full set weight was 50-56 pounds depending on the height of the person. I made it matt black and they looked good. People were shocked that 4 women made the Knights. I didn’t care what people thought. For weapons I went with a gladius sword, musket, pistol and two daggers and a knife. Each weapon had the Knights name stamped on them and they were glossy black. Well it was a good idea and I started them on a training program for fitness strength, hand to hand combat, marksmanship, sword skills and short weapon skills. After the first week of practice I had to add gauntlets to the uniform and we switched to wooden weapons. I had good marksmanship trainers but needed hand to hand and melee weapon trainers. Well even if they were not competent right now they skill looked intimidating.

Carina finally returned to my bed in April. I had been keeping so busy I was mentally distracted so didn’t mind the nights alone. Ella returned as well but it turns out they were trying to not get pregnant right now. They had their hands full and they were also worried about the coming war. We had updates that the Spanish and English planed on 12,000 men. It would have soldiers from Virginia to New York joining with Spanish marching up from Florida. It would be the largest army assembled in America. I decided to have the Galahad stay off shore, ready for conflict even though we were months away from the fleet arrival. I took a week to scout Virginia in eagle form. There was the French fort. And north were three English forts…maybe 500 soldiers each. I found two other smaller forts, about half the size inland. Along the coast two anchored English warships in Jamestown, one in New York and one headed north. I didn’t see any ships 50 miles out to see before returning to Avalon. When I got back I talked with Colette and learned the French were planning to send 1000 soldiers to reinforce Camelot and 500 to Avalon and another 250 to reinforce their fort. I went to the partially built embassy and found the French ambassador. What we really needed were experienced sailors and marines. He sent a message to the fort to transfer 30 sailors and 40 marines to train the Galahad crew. I flew to Camelot and with my 6 golems I helped build fortifications, two barracks for the French troops, two cannon batteries with hardened stone, a 300’ tall watch tower that was only 10’ wide and was basically a hollow tube with a ladder in the center. It was getting close to the appointed day. From the top of the tower I flew east and searched the ocean every evening, checking out about in a 70 mile arc. These flights took four hours and I carried two bags of stone pebbles with me. Three weeks of these flights and I saw a group in the distance, flying toward it showed a long string of ships. Counting there were 107 ships, the leading group was Spanish, the trailing group was English with a few Portuguese. Most were war galleons. They were about 100 miles from shore and were headed to North Florida. I circled and was not sure what to do. It was a 3 hour round trip to Camelot to pick up the prepped stone pebble bags. Even then I could take only 6 bags without overloading. I decided on dropping my two bags on the two biggest English ships. It was close to sunset so I hoped to be able to find the fleet in the dark by burning ships. I flew back to Avalon and when I returned the fleet looked to have scattered. Groups were headed, south, southwest, north, northwest and west. West was mostly Spanish warships. I burned 5 ships heading west and one ship heading southwest. I miss dropped the stones on the ship heading southwest because I was in a rush. I raced back to the tower. Returning with 6 more bags. The ships were running dark but my eagle eyesight helped me find them. They were spreading out more. I focused on the Spanish ships and dropped my cargos more cautiously. Two of the ships did fire volleys of muskets at me but none hit. I knew on my next trip I would be hard pressed to find the ships in the dark. As I was flying back I stopped a large Spanish ship about 50 miles from the coast. I flew down and shot the man in the crow’s nest. I transformed into human form. From the crow’s nest I sniped 19 men on the deck below before they figured out what was going on. I took flight in eagle form and returned to the tower. I was exhausted. I was fairly certain I had gotten 13 ships of the fleet. I opened the hatch on the tower and slept on the hammock directly below. The city watchers would normally have someone here but they were only here when the city was in danger as they didn’t have enough to staff it right now. The French troops were due in a week. I slept until morning. On waking I ran down to the town and ate five cheese and ham omelets. I then told the mayor the fleets were 1-3 days off shore depending on the winds. I told him it was not good the numbers were much higher than projected. I hoped to cut the fleet by 1/3 but the Galahad needed to patrol offshore. Fortunately the French had trained the green crew a bit. Midmorning I felt good enough for another flight. I sunk two warships and four supply ships to the northeast. That afternoon I got three warships and three supply ships. When rested I took flight again. The first ship I found was only 25 miles from shore…they were getting close. Then found a bunched group and was able to sink 5 warships. I was getting shot it almost every dive bomb now but dropping the thermal stone bags from 300 yards prevented them from hitting me. Each bag had 200+ small stones of various shapes and sizes. I usually dropped them at 1300 hundred degrees. The ships end was almost guaranteed. I circled and watched them fight the fires. It was fruitless as the stones burned quickly through the deck, once below the fires spread too quickly and if one found gunpowder it accelerated the ships end. I took two more flights before sunset. My best guess was I had removed 38 to 40 ships from reaching the coast. I was mostly gliding as my wings were beyond fatigued. I glided to the tower and shocked the man stationed there. I had 20 more prepared bags of stone and I would hate myself if I didn’t use them. The soldier in the tower said the troops had arrived in Avalon and the 1000 troops where marching down the road. They were 8 days away according to the message. That would make things tight. I hadn’t realized the French were coming down from Canada. I told the watcher to go get me food and after I ate I told him to wake me in four hours.

On being awakened I just lay there. Should I call more golems? How effective had I been so far. I told to soldier to go make another 20 bags of small river stones and handed him a sample. This flight I found four ships about 40 miles south of Camelot. They were anchored and transporting men to the beach. I dropped stones on the two biggest ships before flying away. Three hundred muskets shooting at me was too much. I flew south along the coast but didn’t find any other ships in 40 miles so went 20 miles out to see and flew north. Soon I found individual ships heading due east. I selectively targeted just four warships but I had numerous targets. Back at the tower I collapsed when returning to human form. The soldier was there and had more food and drink ready and had completed the task for more bags. I told him to relay that 4 ships had landed 40 miles south. I slept two hours before flying off again. I was heading north and found a cluster of seven ships less than 10 miles from shore. After bombing two ships and coming in on the third cannons erupted on the decks of ships. I laughed cannon balls wouldn’t hit….it was grape shot. I was hit multiple times. My wing was shattered, two hit my chest, one in my leg. I crashed into the water and while losing consciousness transformed to dolphin form, then I sank. Drowning was uncomfortable. I came awake and fighting for life got to the surface. I swam south and then to shore. I crawled to the sand and into the woods in human form. My body had no injuries but I felt like I had just ran 100 miles. In panther form I climbed a tree and curled into a ball in a branch fork.

It was dawn when I woke. I went to sleep just as the sun was setting so I slept 10 hours. my body was stiff. I stretched listened to my stomach. Before I could go eagle and return to Camelot I noticed six Spanish soldiers moving below me. They were not looking for me, they were just scouts. At 20 yards they were an easy shot. I killed all six in my human form as that was the form I had the best aim in. I went panther and ran south while calling my golems to me. I passed the golems and told them to attack the Spanish and English landing. I walked into Camelot naked. I went to my warehouse apartment and got some clothes then some food in town. I told the mayor the armies were marshalling and he put out an announcement people could evacuate to Lancelot 420 miles away down the road. Soon people were packing and leaving. At the warehouse I activated my monkeys. They emerged from the ground. I would send them south at dark. I needed rest so I went to sleep after outlining the monkeys orders.

I was awoken around midnight. One of the monkeys had been destroyed and the link cut. Soon after another monkey was lost. The backlash from the cut connections gave me a monster headache. I waited in the bed awake and an hour later a third monkey golem was destroyed. The fight to the north seemed to be going fine. What was happening to the south. I checked and my eagle form still wasn’t ready for long flight. I needed rest before flying again. I went out into town and the militia was mobilized with a few captains giving them instructions. I walked south and waited at the hasty wooden wall built at the edge of the city. An older woman brought me some food, a bottle of ale and meat pie that was heavy on gravy. I waited a half hour before walking south. My stomach was churning and I had to vomit. I think I was poisoned. Although it was a little painful I felt my body recovering. I tried to remember what the women who gave me the pie looked like and I couldn’t get a picture. I kept walking until I found a young apple tree orchard. I aged a tree and fruited it. A few apples made me feel better. As I felt better I went wolf but kept my clothes in my mouth. I started moving south in the woods. The sun was coming up and i was getting close to where I had seen the 4 ships unloading. I went human and started walking. I came upon the slaughter. The monkeys had done a good job of attacking the camp. Hundreds were dead. I found the first slain golem, it was shattered. There were a few priests around the golem. Did they have magic? The second golem was a dozen yards south and was also shattered. One priest was nearby… The final golem that was destroyed was 70 yards further south and it was surrounded by 50 dead bodies, if not more. The remaining golems were close by and I summoned them. I asked them who killed the others. They all ran to a spot and pointed to a spear. I walked over and picked it up. I felt my magic go chaotic inside me and dropped it. The spear had some type of magic attached to it. I wrapped it up in a blanket. I decided this weapon needed to be buried. I had a golem run to the tower in Avalon and store it there. I hoped this was the only such item they had with them. Walking a few hours further and I found 3 beached ships. One was considerably burned. It looked like the sailors were getting ready to get the ships back in the water. Supplies were stacked inland. I walked up to the supplies. A man was sitting there. He was English and I told him I was a cook on the **Great Gatsby**which was burned and I had swam ashore. I was betting the common soldier didn’t know ever ship in the fleet. We got to talking and I got his impressions of everything. The church had pushed for and financed this expedition. Every ship had 2-3 Inquisitors on them and they were in charge. That made sense if they were paying for this. The soldier thought they were fighting demons. I asked for some food and he cracked a crate for me. Brined beef. Two other guys came up from the ships and together they got a fire going and boiled the beef. It was salty but good. I figured waiting here till I could fly again was a good idea. Six hours later another ship beached itself and soldiers began disembarking. We just ate and watched because they were Spanish. Two men in red and white robes came up the beach with 30 soldiers. We watched as they moved inland and set up a camp. I ordered the remaining monkeys to attack to see what the priests brought to the table. As the golems emerged from the woods the soldiers started firing muskets and the robes ran back to the ship. I ran with them. The monkeys slaughtered the 30 soldiers and I boarded the ship with the red robes. Dozens of men on deck were shooting the monkeys and the balls had no effect. I yelled at the priests to do something as they retreated to the stern. One of the priests looked directly at me at said to fight and god would protect me. I yelled at him what about the spears and his look changed. He said more calmly than I thought possible that the spear was not on their ship and the Cardinal’s ship was sunk with the saint’s sword. I ran to him and asked what else he had to fight the demons. He was stunned for a bit then said that was all they had brought with them from the Church. Two weapons that could destroy my golems and I had captured one and the other was at the bottom of the ocean. I slowly smiled and shot both priests with stone bullet in the stern cabin we had moved to. Then I ordered the monkey golems to push the attack. People screamed and yelled and tried to get in. I just waited. In an hour the noises outside stopped and I walked outside. The deck was covered in bodies. I walked to the bow, the ship floated 30 yards off shore…they had gotten it off the beach…the golems were in the rigging, searching for enemies. I jumped into the water and swam to shore. I heard the golems swam a new victim on the ship. On shore I grabbed a few stones and tossed the on the ships after heating them.

Walking into the woods I felt no regrets. I still had a long way to go but things were looking good. I rested a few hours then took flight in eagle form to recon. 100 miles south 6 ships had landed and met up with the Spanish from the colonies. I couldn’t count but definitely over 2000. I went south another 50 miles and no other troops. I went out to the ocean and flew north. I counted 7 more ships before reaching Camelot that had yet to land. North of the city there were 14 ships I found at sea. I went to the shore and found the golems had eliminated all the invaders between the French fort and Camelot. Further north Jamestown had hundreds of tents and three ships. I couldn’t hazard a guess but they definitely could run over the French fort. I flew back to Camelot and brought the monkeys and golems back. I told the mayor I was poisoned. He was upset and said he would send me over food. I got my food and went to sleep. I slept half a day and finally felt refreshed. I wasn’t sure where I should focus my efforts. The French could slow the northern forces but they would probably all die. The southern Spanish forces were currently weaker though. I decided to send the monkeys out to scavenge the wrecks and bring the goods to the warehouse. If they could find the sword that matched the spear all the better.

I decided to wait and react. I did have the Galahad head north to engage some ships to season the crew. I had to wait four days before the French fort came under attack. I just sent in the 6 golems. I was waiting… the warships should form a fleet now that they had departed their troops. I expected the ships to attack from the sea, and land forces to attack north and south. The Galahad had sunk three ships so far but they now ran away when she came into view. As expected the day after the French fort came under attack the Spanish pushed north and I found a fleet of 27 warships getting ready to make a run. The French reinforcements were a day away. I decided to drop thermal rocks on the fleet from a half a mile up. Accuracy was a problem but 3 ships did catch fire and two sank.

I waited till the 6 golems returned. One golem was missing a hand, have to repair that. But first I sent them south and flew overhead watching. A few forward scouts were taken down by the golems. As the golems approached cannons started firing. The army was mustering. The golems draw their gem blades which I had put a lot of effort into. The blades had a light stone embedded at 100 lumens and they glowed. They zipped past the cannons and waded into the main force. It was twenty minutes before the Spanish broke and ran. The golems killed 60% of the men before I called them back. I flew over the enemy fleet and they were approaching the Galahad. The sea battle went well for about two hours then the Galahad sails were too damaged to maneuver. The enemy fleet was down to 19 ships that were functional then they sacrificed ships to board the Galahad. Two more ships were knocked out but the next two got men aboard. If this was a battle of attrition we were going to lose. I landed on the Galahad and took cover. I joined the fight with my stone bullet spell and tossing thermal stones on the other ships by breaking off parts of the Galahad with soften stone. The enemy tossed casks of burning oil at us. It did run below deck but the volume was not great enough to cause problems yet. I looked at all the bodies stacking up around we were outnumbered 3 to 1 on the deck. Two more ships were coming in as the lower deck cannons had sunk the ships attached. I went to the stern cabins and got the crew inside and sealed the door with magic then raced to seal the other two doors.

Soon the ship was overrun. I had 27 men with me. The men on the lower decks were putting up a fight from the sounds. Thirty minutes later the enemy had cannons on deck and were shooting them at the door. I hardened the door and was happy to see the cannon ball bounce and kill two men on deck. A sailor handed me clothes. Yeah I had been running around naked. I could soften a wall and get away any time in animal form. I softened the floor in a corner and made a hatch to below deck. I then went and killed seventeen invaders and got 8 of my sailors to the stern deck. Three more trip and I had rescued 15 more soldiers. It had been two hours since I had sealed the stern cabins. The ship was taken. I wasn’t going to abandon the 50 men, 5 of whom were the French volunteers. I waited 3 hours to top off my magic. Then I salvaged stone from the ship and built a golem. Not my best work but after I hardened it to the max I prepared to retake the ship. There were 4 cannons pointed at the stern deck and they had given up trying to break the wall and door. Three priests in the red robes of the inquisition came aboard and were talking trying to get us to surrender. They didn’t speak English so a crew member translated for me. I took the lead and said if they didn’t surrender I would kill them all. They thought I was funny until the golem burst through a softened door and quickly crushed the priests necks. The golem started rampaging. I remained inside defending the door. Soon bodies on the ship were stacking up. The invaders started retreating to their ships but the golem was merciless. It was a massacre but as the ships unhooked and moved away the golem got hit by a cannon ball. It wasn’t damaged but was knocked overboard. Shit, I cut the magic connection to the golem. I went and peeked around on deck since they had put tar on the windows. There was a lot of balls flying around but the ships were losing their angle. I didn’t think the enemies saw the golem go overboard as they were all scattering. I went eagle and took flight. Overhead I could see the ships were lending aide to the ships we damaged and 6 ships were heading toward 3 other ships. The ships were French. Another battle was coming. I cut west and circled assessing the Spanish/English fleet. They were in rough shape except the 6 ships heading to the French. I went to the French ships and landed and got shot twice, luckily in the chest. Guess a naked guy appearing on deck was threatening. Once things calmed down the captain talked with me and I had him head toward the coast to create time before the engagement. I went and got stones and two hours later all six pursuing ships were aflame. I told the French to go rescue the Galahad. I made a trip to shore and got two more bundles of stones. I flew to find the Galahad. It was being left alone and the enemy fleet had scattered. I tracked and burned two more ships that were the closest to the Galahad. Turning in the air I headed to Camelot.

I landed in the tower and got the news from the stationed soldier. The French had arrived and were sweeping the countrysides. We had won. I waited in Camelot the next 3 days, helping find pockets of Spanish. Unfortunately it was not all good news. The Enterprise and Endeavor had ran into three damaged warships. The battle was an exchange of cannon and both the Enterprise and Endeavor took damage but they ships sailed east after the exchange. The Enterprise had to be abandoned a day after and the Endeavor needs lots of repairs. They lost 29 sailors and 19 colonists. I thought for a bit and told them they were going to transfer to the Galahad and the Endeavor would be sold. I needed to retaliate so that meant sailing to Spain and England. I also needed to find a way to speed up the Galahad. My warehouse had a few chests of coins from the monkeys but no magic sword. The French soldiers were to be housed and fed on my dime. I decided to fly to Avalon.

I was shocked to find Avalon was also attacked. Apparently the Spanish had used the trade road and 1200 soldiers with 19 priests had attacked. The golems had made quick work of them but 17 men, 27 French and 3 children had been killed. i was angry and my vengeance would be fierce. I called all the golems to me with the exception of the monkeys. They could continue doing salvage trips. I went to my 3rd floor of the tower and looked at the maps. I wanted to establish 3 more towns, one every 100 miles west of Lancelot. I wrote a letter for Amelia to make it happen. As for names, Galahad, Percival, and Tristan. Those were all the knights I could remember but I knew there were more.