Chapter 24

I decided to take 12 Magi Knights with me as well. I spent 3 months getting ready for the expedition. I completed some of the upper floors in the magi tower, I met with the new elected senate and told them of their duties, I made 150,000 coins, I helped the new influx get settled, I made trips to cities curing disease, I lectured in the college, and I transcribed the first two Harry Potter books. The first class for the magi tower was selected, 63 women were selected, 4 of them were my daughters. Caleb and Liam were the only two boys. It was a large class but Riona expected half that number next year to pass the entrance. She had also reminded me to build another dormitory tower. Feeling confident everything was in good hands I went to Camelot on March 8th, 1679. When I returned I would have the wedding to marry Carina.

The steamship was ready to leave when I arrived with my 6 Pantheon golems. I checked the warehouse and they had found a good amount of salvage. I decided to let them continue because I wanted that sword but I let them extend their range south as well. As we left port I decided I was bored. I started making 4000 lumen light stones and tossing them in the water every 20 minutes from the stern at night and watching them disappear. I young woman came and stood next to me. She was one of the colonists and we started talking and her name was Tabitha. She had no magic but wasn’t afraid to talk to me. I asked her how people perceived me and she was honest. I was mostly seen as an untouchable figure. Both vengeful and compassionate. I asked her why she was on this colony mission. She said jobs were hard to come by. You could always find work but the jobs just paid enough to get by. I made a note to start more free trade in the cities. I controlled about 60% of all businesses and 50% of food production. Tabitha was hoping to start a tavern and find a husband who was a brewer. He dad had ran a pub in England before he died from the plague. I handed her a new light stone to toss and she was reluctant…it was valuable. I told her it felt liberating and watching the stone disappear made one remember nothing is permanent. She asked if I was immortal. I looked 25 and hadn’t aged according to rumors. I laughed and said no. I would die eventually, either by the hand of a man or by time. It took us 3 days to reach the city of Excalibur. The city was thriving and I was happy to see the population was about 15% Indian. We unloaded some cargo and I spent a day paving some roads and building a cannon battery in the harbor. It was a small 8 24 pound cannon battery but had hardened stone and a barracks for 60 men. I also left the mayor 24 light stones to light the streets at night.

Our next stop was to settle the colonists in Panama. A Spanish merchant was spotted and we intercepted it. We fired two volleys and they surrendered. We boarded them. The captain was petrified as we searched the ship. They had mostly coffee beans and cocoa beans for cargo. I gave him 6 light stones and took the entire cargo. I had slightly underpaid but the captain was happy to get away. In eagle form I identified the best spot for a town. It was a dangerous place for a town as land armies would find it easily. We spent a week helping the town build two fortifications on the coast, each with 10 cannons and a 40 man barracks. For the town we built 30 houses and a warehouse for the families. I even built a large tavern just for Tabitha out of hardened stone and it had 6 rooms on the second floor she could rent out. Wishing the soldiers and 193 colonists luck we left.

The first target had 2 warships in the harbor and six merchants. It was one of the gold, gem and silver accumulating cities. Overnight I destroyed the warships with thermal rocks and the golems broke into the barracks and took out the soldiers. We left the citizens alone as they fled. The merchant ships were trapped in the harbor. In the morning the golems looted the warehouse and the sunken warships which were treasure galleons. The haul was very good. We searched the merchant ships and sized 3 tons of silver ore and 160 barrels of coffee beans. I paid for the coffee beans with 6 light stones. We had one more target city and things went very similar but we sank 3 warships this time and the resistance lasted half a day. Now I just wanted to cruise the Caribbean and sink any warships I found. So for the next two weeks we hunted 4 Spanish warships down. The final stop was with a merchant and I addressed a letter to the king for him to carry. It stated the requirements to end the war he had started. I wanted the land from Panama north and he was to resume the silver and gold tribute. We then headed home to Camelot.

We were welcomed with fanfare on returning. The loot was transferred to my warehouse and 6 golems took 6 large carts of goods to Avalon, they would have to make 4 more trips to transport everything. I was looking forward to the coffee once we figured out roasting. I flew home to the tower after having a beer with the sailors.

Carina was happy to see me safe but still no sex until after the wedding. The wedding was set for June 9th, 1679, over two months away! I was besieged by the kids, they wanted the 3rd Harry Potter book. Figures that was more important than seeing their father. So my next three days were spent transcribing the 3rd and 4th harry potter books and making coins. Amelia wanted me to create a bridge over the Mississippi as flooding had destroyed the skiffs they were using, slowing the settlers heading west. I just nodded and said maybe after the wedding. For the next week though I spent time working on creating railroad rails. This was because we had our first steam engine locomotive. I made 30 miles of rails in a week. I only hardened 1 mile worth on the rails so they could lay them down and see how the engine worked. The train station for Avalon was a ½ mile south of the main road through town and the track headed east. I then focused on the magi tower for three weeks getting it to an even 800’ in height. Then I was pulled to see the train. It had an engine, coal car and one passenger car. It got moving slowly and went half a mile before breaking. The metalsmiths, engineers and laborers looked at me expectantly. They had succeeded so I spent all my remaining time leading up to wedding hardening more rails.

The wedding followed the modern vision I gave Carina. She had a white silk dress and I wore a black suit. We had 280 guests and the older children. After vows we had a big party for the guests and then I finally got to make love to Carina again. Carina was still beautiful to me at 34 but I could see her aging. After some playful sex and tiring ourselves I laid there staring at the ceiling. Carina would grow old and pass away. I was doomed to live a dozen lifetimes with the goal of saving humanity from extinction. She woke and asked me what I was thinking. I said the miracle of knowing brief happiness.

I sent out 100 laborers and two engineers to the Mississippi crossing. They were to develop a bridge plan and collect as much rock as possible for my arrival. My next few months were split between working on the tower and making rails for the train line. It was easy to make rails but hardening them to maxim hardness took a lot of magic because of the volume. With a lot of effort I was able to only harden the outer layers of the rails. But after doing this for a day I found it took me twice as long so I just hardened the whole rail anyway. I also had my banker start to divest me from businesses. They were to sell them to the operators at a reasonable price. I set interest rates for loans at 3.33%. I didn’t need the cash but capitalism would help growth. We adjusted the tax rate, it was now 10% for the first 1000 AC they earned. It went to 20% for 1000 AC to 2000 AC. Then 30% from 2000 AC to 10000 AC. It was then 40% for income over 10000 AC. And it increased to 50% for over 100000 AC. 2000 AC was the medium income for a worker in the city. So this new tax rate added 100 AC to the average person. We set deductions for capital improvements to a maximum of 50% the total value of a business, it would slow growth but not hinder it. It was going to be crazy tracking all this and people who were not paid by me would probably lie but that wasn’t my problem.

By November 1st I had made 100 miles of rails and they were laying it faster than I could make them. But I had to leave a pregnant Carina to go build a bridge. I decided to go by road with 6 golems. We moved fast but I stopped frequently to improve the road. It took two weeks to reach the Mississippi. I found the engineer and talked to him for a while. I started by making a large stone footing on each shore. The bridge was to be 30’ above the river which was not too violent right now. The span was to be 320’ across and 40’ wide. I decided it needed to be 60’ wide for the future train. Although it wasn’t needed with the strength of the spell hardened stone we added two support pillars in the river. The problem came with the amount of stone collected. I finished the pillars and was only able to make a 12’ wide bridge with the available stone. I left and the laborers were to stockpile stone for me. But I probably would finish the bridge until the train reached here.

I returned to Avalon on December 25th, 1679. It was for the New Year holiday. Collette said the Spanish king had been overthrown and cut ties to the church. They accepted my terms and the new king had sent additional gifts of concession. The pope was greatly weakened and the inquisition in Spain was expelled. Riona had 27 new mages entering their first year. Only 17 of the first class had passed to their second year, the ones that failed would join the new 27 to repeat. Amelia had the population updates. Settling in Avalon was restricted so the growth wasn’t too much. We had 29 settlements with over 1000 citizens and an estimated 290,000 people. Merlin on the west coast was growing but she said the settlement I set up when I went to Asia was empty. It was resettled with one of the groups sent west, another group went north and settled in Portland. I was concerned about New Orleans growth because it could flood easily. I knew we would be heading for disaster over and over again. She said the English were fortifying there northern territory but not causing trouble. The French controlled western Canada.

Camelot 37000, Pendragon 5500, Avalon 13000, Lancelot 9700, Excalibur 6900, Galahad 3700, Percival 1900, Gawain 1800, Lionel 1100, Geharis 1000, Bedivere 1600, Gareth 1900, Lamorak 3300, Kay 1100, Merlin 900, Savannah 16000, New Orleans 4700…..

I was happy with the growth and Amelia and Collette were doing a great job. From Avalon I would be able to accelerate technology advances and grow the magic power of the Kingdom. I still needed to complete the magic academy, make thousands of rails, millions of coins and research the spear that disrupted magic. Maybe magic could get us into space and to the moon…

January was a good month. I had solidified my magic gains and was happy. I reviewed where I was at.

Magic Pool: 211, Magic Regen: 14.6 per hour

Spell Design Points: 4

* Ageless, Level 5 (Stone Magic Ability) – like all stone you are ageless, your body ages 1/14th as fast greatly increasing your life expectancy, each level increase slightly slows aging even further, Evolution: hibernate for up to 1000 years
* Shapeshift, Level 5 (Nature Magic Ability) – you can shape change into one beast form healing injuries, each level increase adds another beast form, forms: Black Panther, White Wolf, Bottlenose Dolphin, Eagle; Evolution: Can half or double mass
* Stalwart Immunity, Level 6 (Stone Magic Ability) – you have resistance to disease and infections, each level improves the speed at which you heal from injuries and poisons , Evolution: Rebirth, 7 day cooldown
* Magic Sense, Level 8 (Divination Magic Ability) – you can sense magic and estimate its power, each level improves the range, Evolution: greatly increases range
* Meditation, Level 5 (Mental Magic Ability) – increase magic recovery by 100%, each level increase slightly increases recovery rate, Evolution: 25% increase in recovery
* Stone Affinity Mastery, Level 8 (Stone Magic Ability) – reduces the cost of stone spells by 20%, each level slightly reduces the cost further, Evolution: casting speed increased by 25% for stone spells
* Stone Golem, Level 15 (32/100) (Stone Spell – tier 9) – create a golem from 1 cubic yard of stone, each level increase adds density, strength and durability, COST: 5.0 Magic Pool, Evolutions: Reduced Golem Cost, Improved Intelligence, 20% faster movement
* Soften Stone, Level 13 (63/100) (Stone Spell – tier 3) – turns 2 cubic yard of stone to clay, each level increases affected volume by 1%, COST: .8 Magic per minute, Evolution: Purify Stone, TBD
* Strengthen Stone, Level 15 (25/100) (Stone Spell – tier 3) – improves 1 cubic yard stones resistance to damage, each level improves the volume and the stones strength, COST: 1.1 Magic, Evolution: lighten stone by 20%, selective hardening
* Stone Bullet, Level 10 (7/100) (Stone Spell – tier 0) – temporarily creates a small stone and fires it at a target, each level improves the density and speed of the stone, COST: 0.1 Magic, Evolutions: Control the shape of bullet, bullet accelerates for 3 seconds
* Nature’s Growth, Level 14 (3/100) (Nature Spell – tier 5) – complete 1 year of growth on a single plant in 60 minutes, each level increases the plant’s growth, COST: 1 Magic, Evolutions: Rejuvenate the soil around the roots of the plant, infuse magic to supply the plant for 1 year adds 12 magic cast
* Plant Snare, Level 2 (89/100) (Nature Spell – tier 0) – activate a square yard of plants to entangle an animal within 50 yards, each level increases the area and range, COST: 0.3
* Thermal Stone, Level 14 (45/100) (Stone Spell – tier 3) – raises the temperature of 1 cubic yard of stone 100 degrees for 138 minutes, each level increases the temperature and volume, COST: 0.9 per 109 degrees, Evolutions: Can stack the spell to extend the time of the enchantment, double the effective time
* Light Stone, Level 13 (41/100) (Stone Spell – tier 2) – creates a bright light source (2000 lumens) on 8.1 ounces of stone burning the stone over time 52 years, each level increases affected mass and time, COST: 10, Evolutions: the light can be white, red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo or violet, brightness can be 50 lumens to 4000 lumens
* Cure Disease, Level 10 (5/100) (Healing Spell – tier 3) – cures one person of disease, each level reduces the casting time, COST: 3 Magic, Evolutions: Area of Effect 5 x 5 yards, Cured people have 60 immunity to disease
* Perfect Recall, Level 7 (99/100) (Mental Spell – tier 1) – recall an image in perfect clarity, COST: 0.2 Magic per image, Evolution: can recall 10 seconds of audio instead
* Manipulate Stone, Level 14 (53/100) (Stone Spell – tier 7) – control 4 cubic yards of stone, each level increases affected volume by 1%, COST: 1 Magic per minute, Evolution: double affected volume, increases stone flow rate

With perfect recall having sound evolution I had started to bring popular songs from my timeline. I was hoping the next evolution would allow video with sound. My plan for 1680 was to focus on getting the train line to Camelot and building two more dormitories for the magi academy. I started sending the magi knights out on missions. Usually exploratory missions in groups of 5. They needed experience outside of the compound. The ones I brought with me to the Gulf campaign had made great gains. The university was only a year from completing all the buildings so I would get all those golems back soon but Amelia had a stack of other projects for them. I had Amelia schedule to build two more smaller colleges. One would be in Lancelot and focus on education, we needed teachers so tuition, room and board would be free. The other university was to be built in Camelot and would focus on business, engineering and medicine, there would be a cost. The university in Avalon was free but had very strict admissions. We were actually getting a number of international students coming to try for admittance. She suggested a college on the west coast in Merlin as well and I said that would be fine but it would start very small with just 13 professors.

February 25th, 1680 had our first class of soldiers graduate. 240 had started and 197 were graduating, some washed out do to injury and some because Maya found them unstable. They had followed all the books I gave them on discipline, unity, conditioning and etiquette. I was at the ceremony with Amelia and Collette. They were all infantry trainees which was my mistake. Rather than assign them somewhere I decided they needed more specialized training, nine more months. Forty of each class would be trained as cavalry, 40 would be trained as snipers, 20 would become artillery men, 20 would be trained as marines, 20 would be trained as officers and the rest would be trained as heavy infantry. We called our soldiers Bruins as bears were fierce and found in America. The soldiers had been issued one shot pistols and rifles, a hand axe, knife and gladius. I had the short blade rather than a bayonet because it was faster to use. When talking to the instructors the whole program was redesigned, 8 months of general training, 1 month leave, then 8 months of specialty school, then 1 month leave. We would now start new classes every 6 months. Each class would have 240 still meaning we would have 720 soldiers in training.

When I returned to Avalon I was accosted by Riona. Apparently the Harry Potter books were popular and the kids in the magic school were trying to mimic spells and set up houses in the school. It was a massive disruption for Riona. I just laughed it off, it was her problem. We also decided to have dances between the Magi Tower and Magi Knight school. The socialization events were good for the kids. I had Riona bring Maya by the next day and sat her down. She was married and was pregnant with her third child. I told Maya she was to visit the Magi Knight Academy and start finding agents. I had thought about this for a while and I needed spies. Spies without magic was fine. Maya would need to find the smartest knights that could learn multiple languages and travel the world. I decided this would be a lifetime job. A spy’s retirement would be buying a small business in a foreign country and passively spying. So we needed candidates who loyal and willing to commit their life to Avalon. A year’s class size in the magi knight academy was 12 to 32…she could pull up to 5 agents in each class.

On March 5th, 1680 Carina gave birth to a son, Apollo. She once again swore we were never having sex again even though my healing spell greatly alleviated post birth discomfort and quickened healing for her.