

## Chapter 17: Game Updates

The auction finished, and I checked on my bids...

The human air mage would be here in two days. Excellent!

The human shipwright would be here in three days, which is good. Once we had a ship, trading would be much easier. But did I need sailors for the river to crew a trade ship?

The ETA for the gnome cook was six days. This was going to be tricky. She was a grand master cook, and I needed something to keep her here. My thought was that I would give her 50% ownership in the inn, and hopefully, access to the diverse gardens behind my house would be enough. I was fairly confident the inn could be completed in time, except we were short on lumber. Another problem that needed solving. Guess my scorpion expeditions needed to be put on hold for now.

The giantkin archer was also six days away. When he arrived, I would feel much better about our defenses. I was assuming he would be at least level 40 since he had at least three master-level skills. Maybe we could start harvesting the lumber in the forest on the other side of the river between him and Galena?

The elementalkin alchemist was due in ten days. That was unfortunate, but maybe it was good. It would give me time to build an alchemy shop. I would sketch out a nice shop with a residence above on the second level tonight. And hopefully, the alchemist could make use of the scorpion tails I had collected.

My enchanter was 13 days away. The female sun elf was the most important recruit. If she could work with Sanso and make the translocation stone, my life would be a lot easier. I would need to make sure she had an excellent house ready to try to persuade her to stay. I read the description of the sun elf race in the wiki; sun elves were the nobles of the elven race. I hoped our backwater town appealed to her.

Okay, now back to the auction. I went to the town store to get six gold coins so I could place my next bids. After retrieving the coins, I went home, settled in at my drafting table, and opened the auction interface.

Damn, already 232 bids! Other players were getting active out there! There were 47,945 NPCs, though, so no shortage yet.

I thought for a bit, and perhaps I was overreaching a bit. Once my new NPCs came, I would have to pay them, and I didn't really have a stable income. Maybe this time, I should focus more on trade skills? Maybe one soldier and the rest trade skills? I decided on one soldier, three trade skills, and one farmer. I would save one slot in case something came up, and I was also hoping the inn would raise the quality of the village, giving me more slots.

First, the soldier. I already had two ranged warriors, but I also had a ton of horses. I wanted someone with riding, armor, and a melee weapon. Basically a knight. I selected the skill sorter

and then temperament. Only seven options. Well, seven options that had those three skills as their top three. I couldn't view any skills they might have beyond their 'top 3'. Let's see races, one undead, one kobold, one goblin, two humans, one elf, and one dwarf. I discounted the first three. Then I deselected the dwarf as I just couldn't see the dwarf riding one of the massive orc mounts, how would he even get in the saddle? I knew this was a game and that shouldn't jade my thoughts but I couldn't help it.

That left the two humans and the elf. The humans had the same last name and were the same age, 28. Possibly twins? Obviously, they both had the same skills, but one had Armor: Heavy as his primary and Blade: Medium as his secondary. The other had it reversed. One also had a family of four. I decided to bid on both, so much for plans of only one warrior.

After that. I steeled myself away from combat NPCs to crafting. I stopped after two filters and saw the brewer skill. Well, I had an inn. I needed ale. There were only four experts and only one with the temperament I was seeking. He was a beastman: bull, basically a minotaur. There was a dwarf expert with an unpleasant temperament, choleric. I spent a few minutes trying to imagine both in my village before deciding on the beastman. I guess my subconscious didn't want an irritable dwarf around. The minotaur did have five members of his family, so at least he wouldn't be lonely.

My next crafting skill was woodcraft. My time was starting to be consumed by governing and, building and fighting. I wanted someone to build furniture, do the repairs around town, and possibly help with the building. I had a long list to select from with the proper temperament, so I started to sort by secondary skills. I found a beast: a wolf with expert rank in the secondary fishing skill, and his tertiary skill was novice lumberjack. Perfect! He also had two family members.

Okay, I needed one more selection for now. I should probably get a farmer. I searched for a bit based on family size and race until settling on a halfling female with a massive family of 21! Her other two skills were also at the master level, animal husbandry and butchering.

I spent another hour searching and sorting but resisted using my final bid. I turned to setting my priorities. I wrote out a list:

- *Finish the Inn*
- *Build a house for the air mage*
- *Build a house for the shipwright*
- *Design and build an alchemy shop*
- *Build a house for the giantkin next to Galana's*
- *Design and build an enchanter's shop*
- *Train up Jaesmin*

My top priority was the inn, and I needed lumber for this...next was the air mage arriving in two days. The air mage was human, so I thought maybe simple three-story tower on the riverbank for his residence. I drafted the 25' round tower in the morning. Then, I went about building it myself. As I was casting, a global alert came up.

*Game Mechanics Update: A player can only memorize one spell per their magic + intellect stats divided by 10. These are base stats, and buff and item enhancements have no effect to add additional spell slots. Also, there is now a leveling system for spells. At each tier rank, you can choose an improvement to a spell you know. You can now also unlearn spells. When you unlearn a spell the knowledge and all advancement in the spell will be lost. See your spell interface for more details.*

*Also combat abilities can now also be leveled up in a similar manner. There is no limit to the number of combat abilities a player can learn.*

I immediately opened my interface and checked my stats.

<b>Strength</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>(9)</b>
<b>Constitution</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>(15)</b>
<b>Stamina</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>(11)</b>
<b>Agility</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>(11)</b>
<b>Speed</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>(4)</b>
<b>Intellect</b>	<b>39</b>	
<b>Magic</b>	<b>118</b>	<b>(10)</b>
<b>Channeling</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>(15)</b>
<b>Charisma</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>(5)</b>
<b>Luck</b>	<b>14</b>	
<b>Hit Points</b>	<b>1365</b>	
<b>Stamina</b>	<b>950</b>	
<b>Magic</b>	<b>2198</b>	

I was wearing all my gear except my bear hide cloak. The parentheses showed the amount of each stat I gained from items and buffs. So I had 147 with magic plus intellect. This meant I could learn 14 spells. I currently only knew eight spells. I thought about the message and the change to spells. The developers probably did this for one of two reasons.

The first was that spells leveling up was a planned mechanic, and they needed to balance caster power. My second thought was that maybe there were fighter-oriented players out there learning a whole bunch of spells. It would also make dividing loot in a group much easier. Why would a fighter waste two levels of stat points to level up magic or intelligence just to learn a new spell? I liked the balance this introduced. Next, I looked at my spells.

<u>Spells</u>	<u>Tier</u>	<u>Level</u>	<u>Sphere</u>	<u>CT</u>	<u>Magic Cost</u>
<i>Meld Wood</i>	1	1	Nature: Plant	10 secs	25
<i>Stone Bullet</i>	1	1	Earth: Stone	1 sec	25
<i>Summon Earth</i>	1	1	Earth	5 min	27+
<i>Summon Stone</i>	5	1	Earth: Stone	1 min	200
<i>Summon Boulder</i>	5	1	Earth: Stone	1 min	200
<i>Hail of Stones</i>	5	1	Earth: Stone	5 secs	50
<i>Vine Growth</i>	3	1	Nature	3 secs	25
<i>Summon Wood Elemental</i>	5	1	Nature: Plant	10 min	500

Well, it looked like all my efforts to date had been lost. All my spells were level one. I selected Stone Bullet and looked at the new interface.

<b>Stone Bullet</b>	
Sphere	Earth: Stone Verbal, Somatic
Level	1 0% advancement to next level
Level Bonus	+1% Damage per level
Magic Cost	25
Range	120 Yards
Casting Time	1 second
Damage	20.2 + 16
Effect	This spell creates a golf ball size projectile that is hurled at your target. Hitting the target relies on your marksmanship skill.

**YOU HAVE 1 SPELL IMPROVEMENT POINT**

	<b>1st Point</b>	<b>2nd Point</b>	<b>3rd Point</b>	<b>4th Point</b>	<b>5th+ plus points</b>	
<b>Casting Time Reduction</b>	+1%	+2%	+3%	+4%	+5%	(max 50%)
<b>Damage Bonus</b>	+2%	+3%	+5%	+5%	+5%	(no max)
<b>Range Bonus</b>	+5 yards	+10 yards	+15 yards	+20 yards	+25 yards	(500 yard max)

<b>Accuracy Bonus</b>	+1%	+2%	+3%	+4%	+5%	(max 50%)
<b>Magic Cost Reduction</b>	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%	(max 50%)
<b>Quicker Advancement</b>	+5%	+10%	+15%	+20%	+25%	(no max)
<b>Eliminate Sematic Component</b>	o	NA	NA	NA	NA	
<b>Eliminate Verbal Component</b>	o	NA	NA	NA	NA	
<b>Cast While Moving</b>	25% speed	50% speed	75% speed	100% speed	while riding	
<b>Visual Effect</b>	Rock has dim light spell on it for 5 minutes					
<b>Visual Effect</b>	Change color of rock, choose one					
<b>Visual Effect</b>	Change shape, choose square, pyramid or egg					

Well, this just a whole lot more interesting. The plus 16 from damage was from my 80% bonus for having earth magic at level 40. I cast the spell and checked my advancement. A 5% increase toward level two, so 20 casts out of combat to raise the spell to level 2. I went searching for a target, found a squirrel, and cast the spell again on the unfortunate victim. Hit and kill. I checked again 16% advancement, so 11% for attacking the squirrel. I had Opheela mount up Titan and went to the plains. I found a plains cat and started casting.

*Casting has failed, you cannot cast this spell while mounted*

*Casting has failed, you cannot cast this spell while mounted*

What the fuck?

Ah, the developers must have corrected my scorpion cheat. I would need to invest 5 points into the spell to be cast while riding. I dismounted and cast again. Titan, in the meantime, attacked the insolent lion and killed it in short order. I checked advancement again, 25%, so this time I gained 14% for attacking a level 6 creature.

It appeared to be just as dangerous as I thought, but it appeared that the more dangerous the creature was, the quicker the advancement, just like skills. On foot, I traveled the plains and leveled the spell up to level 5, giving me 4 points to invest.

Then, I began to think about how unfortunate mages were. At low levels, they would be spending time leveling up these low-tier spells only to unlock a better spell at a higher level, which would need to be leveled up. I selected the 5-minute light option. My thought was it could

be useful in a dungeon or as a signal at night by firing it into the air. Then I spent 3 points on magic reduction cost. Reducing the cost from 25 to 22.

I spent the next five hours leveling up *hail of stones* to level 7. All 5 points went into movement, allowing me to cast while moving and mounted. Ha, take that, developers, my cheat would be intact!

I returned to the stables and turned the care of Titan over to my elven horse masters. Patting him on the neck, letting him know he did a good job today. There was not much light left, but I went over to the inn and worked into the night. Around midnight, I went home and to the drafting board. Jaesmin had a meat pie warm and ready for me with some cider. I folded up the library plans. Almost done with those, just a few more days. The air mage tower would take me two days of stone magic castings. I checked the summon stone spell.

Summon Stone		
Sphere	Earth: Stone	Verbal, Somatic, Material: Stone Dust
Level	1	0% advancement to next level
Level Bonus	+1% + 80% Volume	
Magic Cost	200	
Casting Time	60 seconds	
Range	5 yards	
Damage	NA	
Effect	This spell creates a stone with a volume 1 cu yard. The stone can be made into simple shapes by visualization.	

**YOU HAVE 1 SPELL IMPROVEMENT POINT**

	1st Point	2nd Point	3rd Point	4th Point	5th+ plus points	
<b>Casting Time Reduction</b>	+1%	+2%	+3%	+4%	+5%	(max 50%)
<b>Volume Bonus</b>	+2%	+3%	+5%	+5%	+5%	(no max)
<b>Range Bonus</b>	+5 yards	+5 yards	+5 yards	+5 yards	+5 yards	(100 yard max)
<b>Shaping Bonus</b>	+1%	+2%	+3%	+4%	+5%	(max 50%)
<b>Magic Cost Reduction</b>	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%	(max 50%)
<b>Quicker Advancement</b>	+5%	+10%	+15%	+20%	+25%	(no max)

<b>Eliminate Sematic Component</b>	o	NA	NA	NA	NA
<b>Eliminate Verbal Component</b>	o	NA	NA	NA	NA
<b>Eliminate Material Component</b>	o	NA	NA	NA	NA
<b>Cast While Moving</b>	25% speed	50% speed	75% speed	100% speed	while riding
<b>Visual Effect</b>	Rock has veins of color in it, choose color				
<b>Visual Effect</b>	Change color of summoned rock, choose one				

I selected the magic reduction for my first point. The color visual effect sounded cool. Making black stone with silver veins would be an awesome visual. But priorities: max out the magic reduction cost first to speed building.

Good. When the sun came up, I would be able to finish the air mage tower. In the meantime, I drafted a simple stone house for the shipwright. I left a note that Jaesmin was to build it near the docks. The alchemy shop was next. I decided on stone. A full basement for storage, a large open ground floor plan on the first floor, the second floor would be the lab area, the third floor would be living quarters, and finally, the roof would have an area for a garden. The building was 40 feet by 25 feet. I hoped it would be attractive enough for our incoming alchemist.

The sun was just rising, and I heard Jaesmin descending the stairs. I pulled my gear on and went to finish the air mage's tower. It only took seven hours to finish the tower, and I leveled my summon stone twice, both times using the points to reduce the magic cost for the spell. Also of note my skill in carving allowed me more freedom in the shape of the summoned stone, letting me make stairs as well! I tried a medium-sized statue, and it was not too good, but it resembled a larger Simba. I had the wood elementals carry it to the garden behind my house.