Chapter 13

Water was still dripping out of cracks in the hull. The massive ship was intimidating or at least the work it would take to get it space worthy. I could at least cast multiple light stones in the cave as the tarp light proof and would shield the light. I moved the tent to inside the cargo bay for now. I then got to work. I started pulling bad parts and tossing them in a pile in the bay. I wasn’t able to repair much but I knew if I had the mechanics skill I would have had more luck in repairs. I spent about 12 hours a day on the ship, 2 hours on practicing sword form as exercise and a mental break, and 4 hours practicing my spells, styling the cavern, moving the ship up and down and practicing other minor spells. I had only made one overnight trip to Cael’s dungeon to recharge the core and run the dungeon.

Three days later Cael, Red and Vlad showed up. I let them explore the ship. They had planned to drag me to the dungeon but the ship took president. Cael showed off his refurbished orc heavy rifle. I had to excavate an 18 meter deep ‘shooting range’ in the back of the cave. The guys were in awe of my spell but more so in the power of the orc rifle as it tore huge chunks of rock out of the wall. At first Vlad wanted to use one of the large orc cannons but as it was bulky, weighed 120 kg, and needed a major repair job he let it go. So Vlad wanted one of the two remaining ones refurbished for him. Cael said he would work on it.

I showed them my progress on the ship. I had gotten the life support online, well at 27% functionality according to the diagnostic. I had connected my microfusion generator which gave the ship .01% of the required electrical power. Not much. I had bastardized one of the power armor charging alcoves to charge the cleaning robot and my batteries. I had disassembled the three computers and cleaned the parts. I was 90% certain of the parts I would need to repair all three computers. I had cleaned the water tanks and made sure they were sealed. I had cleaned the two water tanks as well. I checked the space for the dual fusion core, cleaned the receptacle and checked all primary power lines. I had been going over the hydrogen fuel maneuvering thrusters which I was about 5% done. Over half of them were damaged or completely destroyed. I needed help and a lot of replacement parts.

We sat in the tent that night discussing everything. The food was steak with spicy gravy and beer. It was decided we would all hit both dungeons tomorrow and the loot would all go to me to sell in Sand Bastion. I would be on my own for the two following days. The next shuttle would arrive in three days and me and Cael would go to Sand Bastion then.

We skated through the dungeons. Red ended up taking two magical clothes from Cael’s dungeon as they supported his skills directly. I ended up holding onto a skill scroll from the other dungeon, *scroll: Lightning Magic Skill*. If I ever had the open skill slot not tabbed for something else I would use it. We separated and I sat in my tent that evening going over my sheets. I planned to try to clear the dungeons on my own tomorrow to break the monotony of working on the ship.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Next Skill Slot at Level 10 |  | Unused Skill Points: 12 | | |
|  | ***Skill*** | ***Level*** | ***Tier*** | **Percent Next Lvl** | **Stat** |
|  | *Spellcraft (Primary)* | *21* | *9* | 64% | *Chan* |
|  | *Spirit Magic* | *3* | *3* | 89% | *Aeth* |
|  | *Mind Shield* | *6* | *4* | 5% | *Int* |
|  | *Sense Psionics* | *5* | *4* | 2% | *Chan* |
|  | *Earth Magic* | *11* | *5* | 69% | *Aeth* |
|  | *Stone Magic* | *18* | *7* | 11% | *Con* |
|  | *Order Magic* | *4* | *3* | 60% | *Aeth* |
|  | *Starship Engineering (secondary)* | *9* | *5* | 22% | *Int* |
|  | *Long Blades* | *9* | *5* | 11% | *Str* |
| 1 | *Marksman* | *11* | *6* | 55% | *Agil* |
| 2 | *Cooking* | *5* | *4* | 49% | *Agil* |
| 3 | *Aether Cultivation* | *15* | *7* | 4% | *Chan* |
| 4 | *Air Magic* | *10* | *5* | 15% | *Aeth* |
| 5 | *Alchemy* | *13* | *6* | 12% | *Int* |
| 6 | *Botany* | *9* | *5* | 37% | *Int* |
| 7 | *Mycology* | *9* | *5* | 1% | *Int* |
| 8 | *Water Magic* | *5* | *4* | 25% | *Aeth* |
| 9 | *Sculptor* | *6* | *4* | 40% | *Chr* |
| 10 | *Supplemental Aether Core (secondary)* | *14* | *7* | 7% | *Aeth/Chan* |
| 11 | *Teleport Magic (primary)* | *12 (+5)* | *5* | 27% | *Int* |
| 12 | *Time Magic* | *10* | *5* | 50% | *Chan* |
| 13 | *Space Magic* | *10* | *5* | 50% | *Aeth* |
| 14 | *Force Magic (secondary)* | *11* | *6* | 49% | *Str* |
| 15 | *Analyze* | *7* | *5* | 19% | *Int* |

I had a boon for analyze to choose. Usually I put these things off and did it in batches.

*Analyze Boon Selection:*

* *“Faster Assessment” – reduce skill use time from 9 seconds to 3 seconds*
* *“Improved Assessment” – once per 24 hours use skill as if it was 10 levels higher*
* *“Conceal” – protect bonded magic items from another’s analyze skill, number of items equal to tier of analyze skill*

The counter analyze option was my choice. Unfortunately I had to have the item Aether bonded. So my sword was out of the abilities usage. I concealed all 5 of my Aether bonded items and set up the skill to automatically do so in the future. Next was my spells.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Next Spell Slot at Intellect 70 | | | Unused Spell Points: 12 | |
|  | ***Spell*** | ***Level*** | ***Rank*** | **Percent Next Level** | **Tier** |
|  | *Heal Other* | *5* | *4* | 52% | *1* |
|  | *Summon Stone (Primary)* | *15* | *7* | 9% | *1* |
|  | *Stone Bullet (Secondary)* | *13* | *7* | 87% | *1* |
|  | *Flight* | *Special* | *Special* | NA | *5* |
|  | *Superior Excavate (Secondary)* | *15* | *6* | 26% | *5* |
|  | *Counter Time Magic* | *Special* | *Special* | NA | *NA* |
|  | *Haste* | *Special* | *Special* | NA | *5* |
| 1 | *Create Water* | *7* | *5* | 48% | *1* |
| 2 | *Aether Respiration* | *9* | *5* | 4% | *3* |
| 3 | *Personal Dimensional Pocket* | *14* | *7* | 40% | *1* |
| 4 | *Personal Force Shield* | *10* | *5* | 38% | *1* |
| 5 | *Space Warp* | *1* | *1* | 0% | *5* |
| 6 | *Replenish Aether Core* | *4* | *3* | 25% | *5* |
| 7 | *Ship Movement* | *5* | *4* | 34% | *5* |
| 8 |  |  |  |  |  |
| 9 |  |  |  |  |  |
| 10 |  |  |  |  |  |
| 11 |  |  |  |  |  |
| 12 |  |  |  |  |  |
| 13 |  |  |  |  |  |
| Psionic | *Fortress Mind* | *4* | *3* | 12% | *2* |

For spell enhancement for heal other I increased the health healed to 62, from 50. For ship movement I was able to double the tons from 1.5 to 3 tons, doubling the spells current efficiency. Last was combat actions.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Next Combat Action Slot at Intellect 90 | | | Unused Action Points: 0 | |
|  | ***Combat Action*** | ***Level*** | ***Rank*** | **Percent Next Level** | **Tier** |
| 1 | Gerrn Sword Form | 9 | 5 | 33% | 1 |
| 2 |  |  |  |  |  |

I had unlocked another action but planned to reserve it for a ranged combat action. I slept well. The next morning I planned to try to solo the two level dungeon, then go to Cael’s dungeon and clear it and then come back and clear the two level dungeon again. It was a very busy day. I equipped my dungeon soloist title and got to work.

It took 9 hours for me to clear on the two level dungeon. I was happy to see my dungeon soloist increase to 2/20 toward the next level. I got a bunch of saleable loot and another skill scroll I decided to hold on too. *Scroll: Seduction Skill*. It seemed this dungeon would drop one or two scrolls per clear. I left my tent set up and rode my bike to Cael’s dungeon. It was a quick clear, less than two hours. I put aside stylistic jacket for Gallana. *White Dress Jacket, +5 Charisma, +2 Dancing Skill, +2 Agility*. It should get me an evening of passionate sex. I recharged in the pool and zipped back to the other dungeon.

My second run didn’t go quite as planned. I got cocky, set off a trap, pulled too many monsters and had to flee to the entrance. My light orc armor saved me. I was at 267/620 health and that was after drinking one of my minor heal potions. It took me an hour to top off and I approached slower and more careful this time. It led me to find a hidden room behind one of the traps with a chest and a mini boss protecting.

The mini boss was a large ass butterfly that shot lightning and could blink every few seconds. The lightning strikes were forked area of effect and I couldn’t dodge. Each hit did 40-44 health damage after my armor reduced it. I eventually took out my Aether pistol and fired a few shots while its blink was on cool down with my haste spell active.

I opened the chest and of course it was trapped. The poison needle couldn’t pierce the orc armor though. Before I could inventory the contents I got a SYSTEM message.

|  |
| --- |
| *Title Bestowed: Treasure Hunter I (next tier at 7 secret chests opened)* |
| *Title Equipped Bonus: +1% bonus to notice hidden objects* |
| *Achievement Reward: +3 Luck, +3 Free Primary Stats* |

I added my 3 free stat points to constitution to get 45 more health as I was feeling kind of fragile. The chest contained 60 silver coins, 12 gold coins, a dagger and two scrolls. The first was a *summoning scroll* to summon a SYSTEM companion. The second was a skill scroll with golden shimmering lettering, *Scroll: Stalwart Defender Skill*. I used the pad to find out what the scrolls did. I could use the summon scroll at a SYSTEM terminal to get a companion if I had a companion slot available. The stalwart defender skill gave a small increase to all physical defenses and resistances and had both strength and constitution associated skills. A dual stat skill. Cael had said they were ridiculously valuable. But even more important I learned the golden lettering made it a golden scroll, giving a free skill not using a slot according to the pad! If you already had the skill you could still use a golden scroll to raise your skill by 5 points! I wasn’t sure if I should use it or give it to Cael or Vlad. The dagger looked like a combat knife. The blade was dark black. *Void Dagger, +7 Agility, +7 Speed, Deep Cut Combat Action, cooldown 60 seconds*.

A few minutes with the pad told me the ‘void’ was a type of super strong metal composite. Deep Cut was a combat action that gave a bleeding effect on the target. I also found these secret chests took between 6 months to two years to respawn in a dungeon but every dungeon had one and only one no matter how many levels. Did Cael find one in his dungeon? I moved the loot to my special space. I would get a sheath for the dagger when I could.

I finished the dungeon carefully. I collected mostly useless loot but I did decide to hold onto another scroll, *scroll: quick draw combat action*. It was useful for both melee and ranged weapons according to the pad, increasing reaction time at the start of a battle or encounter.

Exhausted, I ate 3 instant meals in my tent, planning to do it all again tomorrow.

It only took me 5 minutes after I woke to use the stalwart defender skill scroll. I needed the health from the stat points. Or at least that was how I rationalized it. The dungeon clear took 7 hours and got me more loot but nothing I wanted to hold on too.

Back to Cael’s dungeon I cleared it quickly and started looking for the secret chest. I activated my treasure hunter title and walked the outer wall for two hours and found nothing. There was nothing else in the cavern besides 70 or so swampy pools. They were murky and I wasn’t sure how deep. I started going to each pool and tossing in a stone with a light spell on it. On the 40th or so pool I thought I saw a shimmer in the pool just for a split second even before I tossed the stone. I noticed the pool was right next to where the dragonfly mini-boss was. I tossed a half dozen light stones in, about 15 meters deep, I estimated. Casting Aether respiration I went in and there was the chest on the muddy bottom. I put the chest in my dimensional space and returned to the surface with it. I started to giggle and then laugh at my luck. I left the dungeon and rushed back to my tent at the other dungeon.

In the tent I carefully opened the chest, no traps. Inside was 200 silver coins, another *summon companion* scroll, a spell scroll with golden lettering for the *flame spear* spell and a codpiece. A codpiece according to the pad was basically a sport cup for the groin area. The codpiece was large and gave +2 to all stats and +5 to the leadership skill. I put it in loot to sell bin. Rather than agonize about the flame spear spell I just learned it.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Flame Spear** | 1 |
| Magic Sphere | Fire (Tier 5) |
| Mana Cost | 100 |
| Range | 100 meters |
| Effect | Creates a two meter spear of solid fire |
| Casting Time | 7 seconds |
| Duration | 12 seconds |
| Leveling Effect | minor increase to damage |
| Fires a flame spear at target, requires marksmanship skill to hit | |

I improved the spell immediately choosing to increase damage by 28% over increasing its range by 25 meters. Exhausted I decided to go to sleep rather than clear the dungeon. If I could get up early I would run it before heading to town to see Gallana and then meet up with Cael to take the shuttle to Sand Bastion.

I woke late but still went into the dungeon to try the spell. Holy shit! The spear literally incinerated a mole creature on a hit! I cast it a dozen times walking through the dungeon. I was a fiery god of death! The spear could probably one shot myself. Finding out specific damages required unlocking a combat log through either a skill or combat action. The creatures I was wiping were level 1-3 so maybe I wasn’t as powerful as I thought. Time running short I killed a mini-boss, collected the loot and left the dungeon. The loot was a skill scroll for running. These basic skill scrolls were pretty useless. They gave the benefit of learning a skill in 15 minutes without a trainer or practicing at level 1. They could add +1 to the associated skill if you already had it but only up to level 7. The pad said there was a silver lettered scroll as well. This scroll could give you the skill immediately at level 7 in an open skill slot or add +1 to the skill if you already had it. The value also depended heavily on the usefulness of the skill too.

I had to cancel and recast my pocket dimension spell so I could fit the tent, mattresses with all the loot.

In town I visited Gallana first and gave her the magic white coat. I only had an hour but we made the most of the time. Sex was definitely a great stress relief from all the work I had done.

I met up with Cael at the shuttle site. He had two tickets. He told me he sold a large portion of the salvaged gear from the ship that we had deemed as non-essential. He had 40,000 credits! Cael said they were Ballium credits though. He said the SYSTEM terminal wouldn’t accept them but I could sell anything earned in the dungeon to the SYSTEM terminal. He heard from the locals that you had to pay 10,000 Ballium credits to use the terminal. He handed me half of the 40,000 credits. The plan was I would go to the SYSTEM terminal and Cael would start a search for an engineer for the ship, Ceal asked me to get him a storage ring if possible.

The shuttle looked like an oversized train car with wings when it landed. There were 7 people waiting to board. We boarded and took a pair of seats by the window. It was Cael’s first time on a shuttle and we both starred out the window. The shuttle stopped at 5 other towns and was full with over 100 passengers before headed over the ocean. All of the towns were similar, 50-100 buildings surrounding a minor dungeon. Cael had paid 1000 credits for each ticket so this single run for the crew grossed over 100k in revenue. After talking to other passengers we learned a few of them were administration personal for the company and didn’t pay. But still it had to be a pretty good profit. I talked to one of the stewards and he said they netted about 20,000 once all expenses and salaries were paid out per trip. They ran two routes each month. They had 120 seats and seats were 500 credits but you could bump someone by paying 1000 credits which is what Cael had done or just pay 1000 credits to get a guaranteed seat. Those who had been bumped would have their ticket honored next trip unless they got bumped again.

When we got to the city it was impressive. Both Cael and myself strained by the window. It was a good sized city surrounding a massive spire. The surrounding buildings were up to 30 stories in height. I asked the steward and found the city had over 2 million people which I thought was impressive but he said there were cities in the Ballen Empire with over 100 million people.

We landed in an area that had two other shuttles and one starship that was twice the size of orc gunboat and it was also much more aesthetically pleasing. We exited the shuttle and moved into the city. It was the first time I saw other races. 90% were human but here and there were definitely demi-humanoids. We wondered about for an hour or two, both of us gawking at the sites. After a few asks we found the SYSTEM terminal. It looked like a fancy two story bank covered in black marble. Outside were four soldiers with heavy rifles. I left Cael, planning to meet here in 6 hours, and went to enter. It was 10,000 Ballen credits to enter. I was asked my business and just said commerce. I was let in.