Chapter 8

I left at the beginning of May for the coast as I was expecting the Enterprise and Endeavor. The trip to the coast took 3 days with two golems. The community of twenty was down to 12 from the winter. The had been planning on fish and had bad luck. I grew and fruited two orange trees and two apple trees in front of the community. They didn’t comment and just picked the fruit. I said I was expecting some ships who were coming to establish a port city. Over the next seven days I grew a bunch of fresh produce and brought the settlers fresh deer. Then the ships arrived.

The captains had 47 Irish settlers and 32 English. Five died on the trip. I decided to show the golems to everyone and they helped for two weeks clearing land for fields and getting logs for buildings. Each was worth ten men. The ships went to the southern Spanish city to resupply for the trip home. I stayed and helped get the newcomers settled, growing trees and setting up a hierarchy. I found to my surprise there was an Irish family that was magical. Well just the mother and two daughters. It made me think the magic gene was on the X chromosome and was recessive maybe? I must be one of the few people who had it on my X and Y. Too much to think about. The eldest daughter was married and pregnant but the other daughter was 13. I talked to the father and he understood. His wife had premonitions and even made miraculous use of herbs to heal. A potion maker possibly? I said I wanted their family to travel to Avalon and take residence there. I couldn’t risk losing three potential magic users. I told them about the road west and gave them a cart and gathered a months worth of food for them. He was the most reasonable person I had met in this time. My demonstration of magic had entranced him. He asked if I could teach the younger daughter…take her as a magic apprentice. I tested her…she was just coming into her magic…5% of my pool…so 8 or 9 magic. Pretty good from what I guessed. I said she could accompany me and I would teach her. We were going to ports in Denmark, Sweden and Poland/Russia. He was ok was this. The girl was Riona and looked Irish, red hair, green eyes and freckles. She was shy and fierce at the same time. She did as her parents told her and boarded the ship with me when it returned. We loaded stone onto both ships for me to make into goods during the trip.

The first day Riona shed tears quietly at the meal. I tried to get her to talk but she was quiet. Then I started making balls and light stones and she watched very interested. After an hour she asked if I could do any other magic. I said I could transform into a black cat. Her eyes popped. She always wanted a cat! I transformed into the panther and she was not afraid and petted me. I purred for her and she hugged me. After a few minutes I transformed back. She wanted magic too. I had her start with meditation and trying to focus on the magic in a light stone like I had done with Carina. I went to sleep and she later entered the cabin and got into bed with me. It wasn’t sexual…she wanted to snuggle with the black cat so I transformed for her. It was a cold trip and the ship I was on made use of the thermal stones. We passed three French and two English ships going to America, no conflict. We passed north of England and into cold Danish waters. The entire trip took 70 days to make port in a Danish city. We traded stone weapons and added 17 sailors. No settlers. We went to the Baltic sea next and toward Lund, Sweden. We had a little more luck as the city was recovering from a rough winter. We added 47 settlers. They were mostly families in rough shape trying to escape oppression and poverty. We gave them fresh food as I decided to head home on a so-so successful mission. We stopped in the Netherlands to resupply. I had a lot of cut gems unspent and bought food and luxury goods but there were not enough goods to fill the ships holds. I went to a gallery to look at paintings and found some I liked. They ranged in size from 4 to 8 feet. Then my translator said that a painting I was considering was painted by Rembrandt and I nearly shit myself. It was affordable and I got it and asked if he had anymore by this painter. No but he could check with the artist if he had any on hand. He was alive? Damn, yes I would like to meet him. He was in a small dark studio and was coughing when he answered the door. He was in rough shape and old. My translator asked about paintings and he said his debts the guild prevented him from selling work but he had a brokerage intermediary. I asked about the only painting of his I knew about, **the night watch**, which I wrote a paper on in college. It was in the city and he was proud of the work but the owner was unlikely to sell. I asked about his other works and he showed me dozens of sketches. I bought all his sketches and a few smaller painters with enough gems to cover his debt. He was shocked and said he could get **the night watch** painting for a fee which I immediately gave him in gems. Two days later the painting which was huge was loaded onto my ship. I gave the man a crate of fresh fruit from my ship and commissioned 11 paintings with a few more gems. It was an awesome trip to Amsterdam. We also added 23 more Dutch settlers. There were extremely poor and desperate people everywhere in Europe seeking a better life. I made an effort to meet every colonist as we headed to London as we needed to resupply to make it across the ocean. I found some slight magic in a married women with no children from Sweden. She was married to a leather worker from what I understood of the translation.

I decided to dock both ships and even though I had no goods to trade and I had to pay a significant port fee. I decided to try to get a piano while we resupplied food. There had been a massive fire in London, most of the area near the docks was gone. I found a family willing to sell a piano as they were bankrupt from the fire burning two warehouses. They had a significant library as well, nearly 700 books! I talked with the family patriarch, an older gentlemen in his 70s. He told me the truth about the straights of the family. They owed a significant amount of money due to some unscrupulous actions of enemies of the king and the loss of the warehouses put them in deep trouble. They were being forced out of their city estate and their country estate and moving to an estate in the far north. His family was packing up things at the other estate outside of London. His 3 sons were dead and 3 out of 4 of his grandsons. He was bringing the remains of his family away from the disease and political intrigue. He was willing to sell all the books. I pulled out a small pouch of rubies and passed them to him. He figured that I was paying slightly over fair value for the comprehensive collection. Some of the books were original prints and he had the complete original works of Shakespeare, even material that never went to mass printing. I pulled out another pouch that had a mixture of sapphires, rubies and emeralds. I then proceeded to buy 37 paintings, mostly landscapes but some biblical scenes too. Next I added all his considerable music sheets. Next I added all the furniture in the house. He said that I had reached the value of the gems. I asked if it was enough to pay his debts and he said it was close. Enough to keep his estate outside of London. I gave him another small bag with rubies and bought everything else in the house. The dining wear was probably the most valuable of what was left but there were other things. He was now in a much better mood and said he would help pack everything for the sea voyage in air tight containers. All he would have left were the family portraits and clothes. I sent a runner to the ship to get men to come with the moving and he contacted a warehouse for crates and heavy blankets for the moving to the ship. I asked him if he knew of any place to buy some good scotch and possibly more books. As the sailors and moving men started the packing process he brought me to seller of the best whisky in London whom he was friends with. The shop looked like a normal shop but the proprietor was friendly and he brought out samples. I got 820 bottles of various whiskies. It was over half of his stock. I wasn’t a drinker but if this all aged well I would have it for a long time. The rest of my remaining gems had to be converted to coins which took the rest of the evening. The next day the old man brought me to his friend’s house. He was even older and had no children. He had a massive library, maybe 5000 books! He was not healthy and he had planned to donate his collection to the college. I gave him a good sized pouch of rubies and sapphires. Probably not enough to cover the cost but when I told him the books would be going to a new college in America he took it happily. This man loved knowledge and he was so old his eyes had gone and he couldn’t read anymore. It took two more days to pack and load everything. I went to the Duke in those two days and gave him the rest of my gemstones to turn to coin at 70% for my account which I found was substantial now. I went and withdrew 40% of my balance in silver and gold bars, a fortune. I went with the monetary bars to the ship and launched immediately.

Both ships entered the open sea and I felt like I had gotten away with something. A tingling feeling in my mind. We headed southwest. Riona was doing well. She had gained the magic sense ability and could cast her own version of magic light spell. It was temporary, lasting 6 to 24 hours depending on her investment and gave off a modest heat. At night I had to be a wolf or panther so she could snuggle in the fur. She mostly preferred the longer hair of the wolf.

A week into trip two English warships came up on our stern. We ignored them but they flew the kings flag and were ordering us to yield. They were faster than us my captain told me so we couldn’t out run them. They would catch us in hours. They would have 200-300 fighting men on each ship. We had 30 fighting men on each ship. I went into a row boat with two men and rowed back to the warships. The first ship picked me up and the captain was an admiral. I asked what the reason was for warships. The admiral said my two ships were to return to England and I was to be brought before the king to face charges of treason against the crown. I was dressed in light clothes with no weapons and my sailors were in the row boat below. I knew I could just jump in the water and get away. I had a bag of small stone marbles and flakes of stone in my pocket. There were six men armed near me while I talked with the admiral. I asked if he could clarify the specific charges since I was not a citizen of the British Empire. He stumbled a bit on the fact I was not a citizen but said the charges were conspiring with foreign powers, failure to pay tax on goods from America, withdrawal of illegal sums from the bank, and failure to respond to a kings summons. Well the king had summoned me about 6 hours after I had left port apparently. I sighed and walked to the far railing away from my rowboat. I said something about how the French were not as demanding. The admiral was confused, the foreign powers were the Danes and Sweds, I also had connections to the French? Ahh, my settlers on board probably wandered around London while we were docked. So this was all some scheme to seize my assets, including my ships. I pulled the bag out of my pocket and pulled the string and asked the admiral how much would it cost me for him to have never of found me. He scoffed and said he was loyal to the crown. Pinching the bottom of the bag I cast thermal stone and all the stones heated to 3000 degrees and I threw them all across the deck and toward the open deck. Then I jumped into the water. Losing my clothes I went to dolphin form and swam toward my ships. I was a little over 100 yards when the water sent a concussive force. They were firing cannons?...no the gunpowder…I must have gotten a hot stone on a cask of gunpowder. I swam back to my ship and climbed naked onto the deck. I looked behind the ship. The first warship was on fire and looked to have a hole in the side. The second ship was pulling up next to it as people scrambled to abandon it. My two sailors in the row boat were trying to get away from the descruction. They had no chance to catch us. I went to my cabin and got some stone. I told my captain to keep under full sail until the second warship erupted in flame and then have one ship get our two sailors. I swam to the ship in dolphin form with a rock in my mouth. At the second ship I cast soften stone and in human form spread the claylike rock in a wide meter section on the stern with lots of grooves to hold it. It should stay long enough to burn a hole and start a fire. I had to wait twenty minutes to get my magic recharged then I cast thermal stone heating the rock and let go into the ships wash. The ship had slowed to assist the other ship. I swam away as a dolphin and to the rowboat. Another keg of powder exploded behind me as I got to the rowboat. I transformed and climbed naked into the rowboat surprising the sailors. I took over both oars giving them a break. We all watched as the stern of the second ship smoked then lit on fire. It was six hours before we were picked up. The second ship had sunk and the first warship was dead in the water with two holes in the hull and no sails. We were safe and the remaining ship was probably doomed when waves started to get a little higher. Eventually we were picked up and I got cheers from my sailors.

It seemed if I didn’t get attacked at least once on a sea trip it wasn’t a trip! I decided my ships would focus trading in the Mediterranean sea from now on, no more trips to England. The rest of trip was easy, just a small storm. We entered the harbor and it looked like things were buzzing with buildings going up. I learned the English governor had visited while I was gone. Well he knew about Camelot now. Oh well.

We unloaded the ships. The road west had been extended 6 miles so far with stone gravel. Apparently the city was anxious to connect to Avalon. I good road could allow the trip to take around 12 days instead of a month. The total distance was 360 miles. The road passed the southern tip of a large lake and I hoped to establish a town there as well. I would need to grow an orchard there to make it appealing. I had a lot of personal items to transport to Avalon this trip. I set up a large stone warehouse over the next week while most of the settlers moved out with a months’ worth of provisions. A small mounted squad of English soldiers visited my town and questioned my captain about my ships anchored offshore. There was nothing to do about it. I loaded two crates of books into a cart the next day and left was Riona.

The horse cart was bumpy and not fun. I had left my golem to guard the inside of the warehouse I had built for everything I couldn’t take this trip. Riona had made progress, she could make her light brighter which added to the heat it expelled. After a week she could even throw the light. I think she was on a path to make fireballs. There were three water crossings and two major swamps on the way that were not an issue this trip as it had been dry weather recently. I decided to send two golems to start creating a road through the swamps by adding stone and compacted soil through them. It would make the trip quicker and keep the road straight in the future. The bid water crossings needed bridges, a span of 24’, 38’ and 100’. The safe crossings were a mile away from the road. The 24’ was an easy wood bridge plan after stone anchors. The 38’ required more work and the 100’ would be an engineering problem. I would focus on them this winter.

We caught up to the other group that left 8 days before us. There had been no heavy rains so they were in good spirits. We traveled the last 100 miles with them…the road was looking good and I did grow 80 apple and cherry trees near the lake. I added a 30’ monolith with the word, Pendragon, on it. I figured I should stick with the Arthurian theme for naming towns.

When we reached Avalon things were starting to look like real city. I brought Riona to the tower and caught up with the women. The babies were doing great and Ella was getting big and Renee was showing. My relationship with Riona was such that I was more of a protector and I didn’t feel the attraction the magic pulled me to Carina. Amelia gave me an update. Six people had died since I had left, one women in child birth, two to injuries while working and three to disease. The dam was ready to sealed. It was 50’ tall so far and the gap in the center was just 10’ wide but I had to go fuse a bunch of stones and fuse the slabs for the opening. The town had a thriving market and I needed to make another 20,000 coins in various denominations. We had 2 Spanish trade caravans come up from the south while I was gone and the road by the stream had been extended 10 miles south to shadow the excavation of the stream bed to manage future flooding. There had been 14 incidents of crime, all minor and handled. She went into details of harvests, births and noted some weddings. The religion was a serious thing and people were asking for an ordained priest to do weddings. The biggest news in town to me was that we now had good clear glass.

Carina said she had mastered the sense magic and had expressed magic. She had tripped and instead of hitting the ground hovered for a few seconds before slowly falling to the floor. She also could feel the magic in the three babies in the tower.

Ella and Renee gave me the run down on the school. Things were going well and music lessons were good and they had a few possible prodigies. I told them of my cargo and the piano in Camelot. They were very excited but I said I needed to finish the road before it was brought to Avalon as they didn’t want it damaged.

I spent the next week working on the dam. At night I made coins and light stones. It was kinda of cool to see the new lake fill up day after day. We had a small lake by town and enough valve controls to keep the river following. We did have kids run and collect any trapped fish down stream in buckets and add them to the dam lake.

After the dam project had finished I moved to helping cut stone for buildings. The golems had chisels to make stone blocks but my spell made them fast and cleaner. There were two large structures that were getting basements dug out, the Theater and the Museum. The museum was a new concept but I figured I needed a place for paintings and artwork. I planned for many expansions to the museum but for now it was a 200’ x 300’ building with a storage basement and two floors. The ceilings were going to be 20’ high. I also decided to introduce the sports of soccer and rowing. I made two fields on the commons land and some stands and games happened on Sunday between the towns four teams after church. I had a boat house built on the dam lake which was now called Crystal Lake. Two of the woodworkers were learning how to make shells in one of the bays in the boathouse. It would be months before competition would begin on the lake.

I checked in on the Indians and they were doing well as well as my offspring. The medicine woman asked me to educate the babes in magic. I said there would be a magic school in time for when they turned 15. Just another problem, maybe Riona could run it.

I decided to spend a month working on the road and brought 5 golems with me. I was happy to see three houses near the fruit trees by Pendragon. We made quick work on six small stone bridges ranging from 12’ to 20’. The crossings were only trouble in heavy rain but even that would not be an issue now. We proceeded to complete the bridge over the 24’ and 38’ river with beautiful arched stone bridges. The last big span made me think. We just made a large mass of stone on both banks of fused rocks. I could add pillars of stone every 20’ in the water and make small arched bridges… As I was thinking of my next steps a man came on horse down the road while I was working. He was bringing news the governor had moved troops to Camelot to make a garrison there. The bastard was trying to claim my town!

I left my work and brought my 5 golems. The two golems working on the road through the swamps joined me. They had made good progress and needed maybe two months more to finish the 20’ wide path. I was in my panther form and made it in just two days. I walked into town alone. My ships had left but the town folk had built a rough pier to make unloading easier in the future. I found someone I knew and got the story. Sixty soldiers kicked people out of their homes to use them as a barracks. I went and found the captain of the soldiers, he had occupied his own house. I just walked in. He was talking to two soldiers and jumped to his feet and yelled at me. I told him I was the owner of the town and if his soldiers wanted to garrison here they would have to build their barracks 100 yards to the north of town. It turned into a bit of a shouting match and I had to shoot all three with my stone bullet spell. I was glad my stone bullet was quiet. The golems then burst into the barracks and started ending the occupation. I went through town and shot the soldiers walking there, 7 in total. I checked my warehouse and the golem was there and the items were not disturbed. I had the town pack up four carts with six crates each to bring to Avalon and had them ready to roll in the warehouse. I needed to do some more damage to the English before I returned to Avalon. I had four golems head to finish the road through the swamps. I headed north with three golems.

Moving along the coast north for two weeks I burned down five fortifications, and killed over 1100 soldiers. I used my dolphin thermal rock trick to sink two warships. I stopped just short on New York before returning to Camelot. When I got back to Camelot I talked to the remaining town folk. They cleaned thing up. I decided to give a mental command for the golems in the swamp to gather rocks for the final bridge but they were too far away, I could only summon them. I raced out and got them and set them up to gather stones for the last 100’ bridge with the other 3 golems. When I was back in Camelot I had them build a total of 8 large carts. This took two weeks. Then I had the 8 carts loaded with the best of my warehouse. I would need 4 round trips to get everything in the warehouse to Avalon. I called the golems to come pull the carts and when they arrived I left with 7 settlers choosing to come with me to Avalon. The trip was quick until we reached the wide water crossing. It took 3 days for me to complete a 10’ wide bridge with the 8 golems. It was a quick trip after that. We got to the tower and unloaded and returned to Avalon after the 8 carts were serviced. It took just 3 days to get back.