Chapter 47

I woke early and was highly motivated today. I drafted three copies of the apartment plans and one shop/residential plan. I gave them to Jaesmin to get started on building. I planned to stop by the town hall first today before finding Mag Dog and crew.

The town was abuzz with activity. It seemed somewhat organized as people looked to be in a hurry and knew where they were going. I found my new generic city guards on patrol in the town in groups of three. These were dumb mobs that were programmed in the lord's interface. I hadn’t delved too deeply into the commands of my 12 level 22 guards…well getting closer to 12 as they only spawned at the rate of 1 per day. I took a moment to check on my commands for them. It was basically to keep the peace and attack anyone or anything that attacked town residents. I gave Galana equal control over their commands while I was in editing mode.

I climbed the stairs to Breda’s office. We had gotten on the same page so I just wanted to check in with her. She was huddled over her town model. “Breda?”

She spun about the excitement in her eyes, “Lord Tallis! Come look!” I cautiously approached the model to find a new massive structure adjacent to the central park. It was my epic library. “Don’t say a word! Just look!” She waved her hand at her model city. Not just the library but a…”it’s a magic academy Lord Tallis. Just think we can be the center of learning for this entire region! The envy of all races!”

“Uh, This is great Breda but first we need people to build your vision here. And we are trying to get ready for a large influx of those people. I came to check and see when we should put these tannery plans into the building queue. I also have a very nice set of plans for a paper mill,” I said as I produced both plans. She looked them over intently.

“Yes we will need paper for the library…very wise Lord Tallis…even runic paper? Albeit tier 1 runic paper but still quite useful. We can place this here…” She grabbed a blank block from her desk and placed it next to the lumber mill.

Ok I needed to reel her in again. “Breda! No library will be started until we have the people with the necessary skills to build it. And I don’t have the skills or time to draft a magical academy.”

My tone seemed to slap her to focus. “Oh,” she breathed out solemnly. “We could start the…”

“No!” I affirmed again. “You should know everything needs to be done in order. Populace and infrastructure and then the seven wonders of the world.” Her eyes got all starry as I said the last in reference to a game I played when I was younger…and was terrible at. “I need you to tell us where to build and make plans for increasing our consumable production. I don’t want us going hungry.” She nodded slowly but still looked longingly at the library model in the center of the town.

“Yes, Lord Tallis. You can count on me. Galana is out hunting but she said for you to see her sometime today. I think it had something to do with gnomes applying to the town guard.” Breda finished. Gnomes as town guards? That wouldn’t be Titus my quest giver? No, he had a different role. How would players treat town guards that were only as tall as their belly button? Why did problems come just as fast as answers?

With Breda appearing back on track with the tannery and papermill I went to see my Master of Guilds. Neral, the fire giantkin, was in his office buried under paperwork. “Ah Lord Tallis! I was just about to finish my report for you. I have seven more guilds that will need to elect their Master representative…which may be hard since there are no members with the skill rank of the master!” He chuckled at his joke.

“That sounds fine, just have them reelected every six months…eventually someone will reach the master rank. But I wanted to ask you about your prior issue with Breda,” his face soured when I said that.

He leaned and whispered to me, “We have put many of our differences behind us but she wanted to give the guilds absolutely no power within the city! You can't expect them to pay taxes and get nothing for it! Whenever I broached the topic with her she would just say you are not bringing dirty loud and crafters within my city walls! She wants the city to be a pristine place of peace and quiet!” The large man huffed like he was out of breath. “She has angered Manarag and Curraen repeatedly with her demands.”

“And why wasn’t this brought to me while this feud spawned and grew wings?” I asked.

“Well,” he scratched the back of his head. “You seemed to be avoiding Breda so we didn’t want to distract you.” So it was my fault. I nodded slowly. I had kicked the can on confronting Breda and created more problems.

“Are Manarag and Curraen both ok?” I asked somewhat concerned about my master crafter's disposition.

“Yes,” he sighed. “They think highly of you and were deflecting Breda’s attention from you.” I look of concern crossed my face and he read it, “Don’t worry she is much better now that Manto is taking care of her…needs.” Did he just insinuate that the dwarf and old human wizard were? Seeing my surprise he whispered, “She stayed last night in his tower and had a glow to her this morning.”

“Oh they probably just spent last night testing out new ales,” I said in response. He just nodded at me like I was an idiot. How the hell was I supposed to be able to read NPC dispositions toward each other? I had enough problems with humans.

“Oh your bookseller arrived last night. Elice assigned him a shop and he was asking about the town library,” Neral added. Oh…Garn Steelhand. The dwarf I recruited from Willow’s Bend.

“Send him to Breda. He can appreciate her model in her office. No library for quite some time I'm afraid.” I turned and left the man to figure out his sorting of the guilds.

I went to find my construction crew and Jaesmin was leading them and there was no Sanso. He sent one of his golems with a note that he was taking the morning off today. He was resting in his tower. I hadn’t visited his tower in quite some time so I left my crew to go see him and invited Mad Dog, Grinder and Black Beauty. They were on fetch quests in other cities so were not available.

It was only a 2-mile walk north to his tower so I didn’t need Titan but had the twins get him ready anyway. They actually joined me for the ride as the horses needed exercise. Don’t ask me why virtual horses needed exercise. It definitely changed Titan’s disposition when I took him out. I even whispered to him that we would go leveling soon. Right after we settled all the refugees.

Sanso’s tower looked the same as it had when I visited for the first time for what felt like so long ago. I knocked on the door and was a bit shocked when Elice opened the door. She didn’t look surprised at all. “Come in Lord Tallis,” she said loudly. Sanso was dressed in light cotton clothes.

“I am sorry for taking the morning off Lord, I just wanted too,” I held up my hand to stop him.

“No, I shouldn’t have interrupted you. Your contract gives you one day off in seven and a work week of 40 hours. You have far exceeded that every week you have worked for me. You are indispensable to Malcum and therefore I am doubling your wage,” I finished with a smile. Yeah, so I felt a little guilty about disturbing Sanso’s sleepover. He usually stayed in town with Elice. The extra money wasn’t even enough to cover the value of his summon rock spells or all the work that his small army of golems did in helping grow the town.

I sat in his first-floor room. Drying mushrooms and a small kitchen with a stone dining table. It definitely needed a few womanly touches. Elice sat with us. “So I wanted to ask you about our prospects for mining are Sanso? I am about to review the auction site for skilled workers do I need to hire some miners? The mountains are high-level monsters but you found copper under your tower?”

“I apologize Tallis. I have missed my quota for copper coins. I am just so tired. I don’t think it would be wise to venture near the mountains. Not just because of the monsters but the dwarves that reside deep inside the range might take exception as well,” he said. I hadn’t considered this. Zion, my sheep herder had said his wife’s clan lived in the mountains but I hadn’t given it much thought.

“So should I hire a skilled minter? Or stamper? Or whatever a coinmaker in called? That would take it off your plate completely. Your golems would just need to mine the ore,” I said giving it much consideration.

“My golems have been kept busy by Breda. If they are not building with me then she had them expanding sewers, moving buildings, hauling rock to upgrade our outer walls to stone…” seeing my brow furrow he added, “…I agree with her priorities completely. I kinda of wish I had decided to build my tower in the town zone. I just didn’t know how I would be received,” he looked at Elice and they smiled at each other.

“Do you two want a tower in town? We can just change this to a mining tower or something,” I offered.

“Yes,” Elice answered for him. “He used to like privacy but he is coming out of his stone shell,” she said. Sanso looked uncertain but nodded after seeing Elice’s smile.

“Good. Make me some rough drawings of what you want and I will draft them for you and we can build it together. How about next to the guild hall?” I offered the last as that land still belonged solely to me and I wouldn’t have to confront Breda about it. Also having a friend like Sanso so close would be nice.

With that settled we all walked back to town. Titan ran circles around us as we walked and kept urging me to push him on a long ride. Soon but not today.

We walked to the site and the guild house was far from done. It just wasn’t a priority project. But I was able to indicate the 1.5 acres of land they could build their residence on. Maybe they would want something more conventional than a tower. After that we ate lunch at the packed inn. Fareth was being kept busy with her promise to feed the townsfolk who helped. She was extremely happy cooking though.

We then joined the build team for the rest of the day getting five structures completed. Not the seven we did yesterday but excellent considering we only had Sanso and myself for half the day. Before turning in to go drafting I wanted to make two stops. I wanted to check on Savannah, my little aspiring elf alchemist and talk with Persephone to see if she would teach me the two enchanting skills she knew. I wanted to start working towards being able to draft magical buildings and yesterday I was told what three skills I would need to do that.

Savannah was sweeping the floor when I arrived, “Savannah how goes Malcum’s youngest alchemist.” She looked up and her hair was a little singed but she still had a bright smile.

“Black Beauty bought all my potions! I tried to brew a large batch of my hair growth potions and it blew up…second time this week! Tonna says I need to slow down and think while I brew. I think she is just mad my potions are selling so fast!” she giggled. “Sorry Lord Tallis I don’t have any potions to sell you today.” He face went sullen.

“Don’t worry! I will keep checking in. I have an order for myself for the next time I go out adventuring. I will leave it with you and Tonna can get to it when she can.” I wrote out the health and stamina potions I wanted on paper. I then talked with the excitable elf girl for 30 minutes as she gave me the town gossip. Apparently, all the young children were off trying to get as lucrative an apprenticeship as she had.

Tonna returned from her dinner and smiled at me when she entered her shop. She praised the young elf girl for her progress making the child…no… young woman beam.

My walk to the enchanter’s tower was met with a lot of friendly waves and greetings. The street lamps with magic globes on top were being lit as I walked. It was a nice touch and the symmetry of their placement let me know that Breda had definitely been involved.

Persephone was home and entertaining Kytalia. They were discussing installing some alarm signals on the earthen works for those people who were harvesting outside the walls. We just didn’t have enough patrols yet so early warning of threats was going to be important.

I sat with them and complimented them both on the job they were doing. There were boxes and boxes of material on Persephone's floor and then I remembered that she had pissed off Black Beauty so Black Beauty got her 100 times the number of ingredients she requested. Since it was a repeatable quest Persephone had to pay out 100 times the reward! I planned to never make her upset.

“So the reason I am here is to get instruction in two skills I wish to learn from you Persephone. Enchanting and Runic Script. Can you teach me these skills and let me know the best way to level them?” I asked. Kytalia excused herself as this had nothing to do with her. I just told her she had already earned her monthly bonus for the fantastic work she has done in just a few days!

“So you wish to be an enchanter Lord Tallis? I can teach you those skills. It should just take an hour or so to impart the knowledge. As for leveling them…actual enchanting,” she added bemused. I had been hoping for some type of cheat to level quicker.

“So be it teach me the skills…” I said, groaning as it was just another thing I had to level up before the game launch.

Enchanting 1 Tier 1 Unlocked, +1 Channeling, +0.1% chance to improve object’s rarity

Enchanting: Runic Script 1 Tier 1 Unlocked, +1 Dexterity, +2% speed in enchanting

The basic knowledge instilled I finally understood a lot more about the enchanting arts…at least how little I actually knew about the enchanting arts. The other skill that I needed was called Enchanting: Ritual Magic. Persephone didn’t have this skill so I would have to order a skill book. I would check the auction house on the way home and hopefully get lucky. I spent another hour with Persephone and helped her do some basic enchantments she was preparing. Both my skills leveled once!

It was because as a teacher her skill was so much larger than mine I learned at a much faster pace! Unfortunately, I didn’t have a few days to remain under her tutelage. And it didn’t appear she was going to have the patience of teaching her lord from just the three hours we had spent together.

The auction house was extremely beneficial though. The novice skill books were extremely cheap, just 20 to 30 silver each! A novice skill book raised a skill up to level 7 at most. An expert skill book up to level 23 and master up to level 43. With there being such a large and varied number of skills I felt lucky to find two skill novice skill books on ritual magic for enchanting. I immediately purchased them three copies of the enchanting and a single copy of the runic script skill. It made sense these times were being dumped cheaply. Getting a skill to level 7 in the game was not very difficult and all the testers probably had selected their array of skills weeks ago. Expert-level skill books were 10 gold or more.

I had a number of skills under seven myself. Skills that I had forgotten about. I bought 19 skill books to raise my own skills. Skill books were common dungeon rewards and I had not been delving into dungeons so I had been missing out. The issue was each book took an hour to use…so that was 25 hours of my time in using these books in the future.

I had a few dozen golds in my pocket…could NPCs use skill books? A quick search and the answer was yes but they only benefited once…it took 24 hours for them to use it as well…but the skill book was not destroyed like when a player used it! Also, an NPC had to have an open skill slot and they were usually already maxed out. Still, I dropped 59 gold on 211 different skill books. I tried to focus on useful crafting, magic, and gathering skills. Kytalia would be able to make the best use of this haul. If we had unskilled laborers coming we could start them at level 1 in skill and they could work their way up to become productive.

Mad Dog texted me back and said NPCs usually just learned skills from other NPCs so they were typically not interested in skill books. Well for a small town like Malcum we were about to diversify!

I dropped the massive pile of books off in Kytalia’s office in the town hall with a note. It was very late and just a few automated guards wandered the streets. I returned home and got to work on drafting. I didn’t have any inspiration for magical buildings and I was just focused on getting at least seven copies completed for our build-a-thon tomorrow!