Chapter 20 Promotion from Settlement to Village

I awoke with Jaesmin’s arms draped over me. I stared at the ceiling for a bit thinking. There was a lot to do today but I was so damn comfortable. The air had a slight chill but Jaesmin’s body radiated enough heat to make it perfect.

We would finish the alchemy shop early this morning and then switch to the inn. We needed to furnish the inn and kitchens…that was going to take another trade mission to the city. It was an oversight on my part…ovens, silverware, plates, cooking utensils… Our trade caravan was due back today and I would send them back out. The gnome cook was due in two more days and we could get a temporary kitchen set up. That would hopefully appease the grand master cook. With Galana back I would make another attempt to harvest trees from across the river, Manto, Sanso and Galana should be enough defense against any threat the goblins proved to be.

Dressing I talked idly with Jaesmin about the town residents. I didn’t reveal that she was pregnant, that was a surprise I wanted her to learn on her own…however the programming worked in that regard. “Tallis are we going to finish the inn and alchemy shop today?” she asked as we were leaving.

“Definitely. I am going to have Sanso work on the foundation for our new giantkin today as well.” I paused in my step. “No, he will start on the enchanter’s tower, excavating the three level basements. I think I will draft up some new house plans for our incoming giantkin and build Galana something more suitable.” We waved to town folks as we made our way to the site and began to utilize the lumber present to finish the alchemy shop. I examined the building when we were done.

*Very Rare Alchemy Shop, Health 122,500, Armor 30, Skill Bonus +17% to potion crafting speed and potency*

What! I went to my sheets to figure out the changes. The health was suppose to be 50,000…ah we had a significant bonus from my building skills and materials used…the 17% that was suppose to be just 10%...it was a mix of the same things…just not as potent. It wasn’t a large structure but definitely the jewel of our small village. Town folks walked by and confirmed my suspicions. I went to my interface to see if it raised our villages quality.

No? That can not be right. Fortunately I caught Simba prancing by and stopped him. “Simba why didn’t the village quality increase after we completed this alchemy shop? I mean, it is exceptional.”

Simba sat on his haunches and lectured me, “The NPC recruit system has had three major adjustments. The first was the cost to bid on the NPCs at the auction. The second was the multiplier. And the third was eliminating temperament from the description. The last two are in your town interface.”

I opened the town interface and went to the tabs. Oh shit! There were dozens of updates notifications in each of the tabs. I went to the chart for number of NPCs I could bid on.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| TITLE | MIN POPULATION | NPC Auction Bids |
| Settlement | 20 | 3 |
| Village | 100 | 5 |
| Town | 500 | 10 |
| Large Town | 2,500 | 15 |
| Small City | 7,500 | 20 |
| City | 37,500 | 30 |
| Metropolis | 187,500 | 40 |
| Capital | 937,500 | 50 |
| World Capital | 4,687,500 | 100 |

So this had changed but I didn’t quite remember the original. Simba interrupted, “There should be a message in there noting that the game’s AI has initiated NPC migration mechanics based on war, prosperity and living conditions. The NPC auction just allows population centers to draw in NPCs to fill roles they are missing. Players like yourself can utilize it to occupied population centers. When the game launches NPC cities will compete with players rather than get the left over NPCs from the auction as well. There should be another tab with the new modifiers.”

“So right now players are not competing with NPC cities?” I asked.

“Yes. There are only two hard wired players currently utilizing the NPC auction site as well. You and one other. Since you will not have to start over like the other testers this is a big advantage.” Simba finished.

“This seems like something my AI companion should have informed me of immediately.” I said with some irritation.

“Well if you read all your notifications you would have found that your AI guide companions now require prompts to relay information. We are no longer providing free advice.” He returned my irritation.

I thought for a minute and then asked, “Does this include your own development? You have not bothered me in a while for a spell and I have not seen you committing mass genocide on the local squirrel population.”

“Yes! You need to give me a command to level up!” He moved to rub himself against my legs and started purring.

“Can I just order you to give me important information when needed?” I asked ignoring his obvious plea to be released to attack.

“No. Only direct questions will be processed. You will have access to the world internet once the game launches though. There are already 5000 wikis out there about the game.” He said sounded agitated.

“Fine, Simba go and level up and remind me to get you a new spell in a few days.” Simba launched himself off the ground to pursue a brave chipmunk I had not noticed.

I looked at the NPC auction modifiers. It had been called a multiplier before bit now it was just a simple plus or minus to auction bids. Lord’s Call, my ability, was listed giving +2 bids. Town quality had everything from -50 bids for ‘war torn ruins’ to +20 bids for ‘utopia’. Checking and my town now fell under ‘Above Average Living Conditions’, a +1 modifier. So that meant I should have 6 bids…yes that was how many I had used.

My town population was currently at 109 though and I was still designated as a ‘settlement’. It took a few minutes to find the correct tab to find out why. To become a village I needed a town management building…town hall, castle, manor or similar structure. I went and tried to promote my residence to a manor but it failed to meet the structure minimums to do so. Well damn. Making sure that was all I needed to promote to village status I closed the interface. I would need to explore those tabs again as they were constantly evolving.

With Jaesmin in tow I went to finish the inn. We had just started when a huge commotion came from the village center. I could see Galana mounted on her steed, she had returned with the trade caravan! I rushed to see her and make sure everyone returned safe. The townsfolk were crowded around the general store as the expedition unloaded a multitude of goods from wagons and magic storage bags. I found Galana and talked with her off to the side. She started the conversation.

“It went well Lord Tallis. We set up a trade contract for lumber from Barrington and traded almost all our goods. I have 1,930 gold, 2,800 silver and 8,091 copper coins to add to the village treasury.” She had a smile on her face. That was fantastic! My money troubles were over. Well it was actually only about 20 platinum coins total but this hard currency should alleviate our coin problems. She continued, “We have a quota of hides and meat to send to Barrington for the lumber. It is only about two days harvest for us so I didn’t think it would be an issue. We bought up quite a bit of miscellaneous items to populate the general store as well.” She indicated the people unpacking.

“You did phenomenal Galana. Unfortunately we need to outfit the new inn with cast iron ovens and supplies so they can operate. Our cook will be here in two days.” I said somberly. I wasn’t going to send Galana away though. The new giantkin was coming in two days as well. He could be the caravan guard.

“I got those things Lord,” she said with some humor in her voice. “I probably got a lot of things you hadn’t thought about. The entire town came together before I left and we put together a sizable list. I got just about everything.”

I was a little shocked. “Damn. Consider your wages tripled Galana!” I said extremely happy. There was a management tab for NPCs in my town. I opened it. Galana had shown herself valuable and extremely loyal. The promotion tab was extremely complex. You selected a title for a position and put it into an organization chart and then selected the duties, budget and operation parameters for it. There were a whole bunch of preprogrammed positions.

I paged through them and was deciding between either Captain of the City Watch or Master Constable. The Master Constable had more freedom than the Captain in the preset settings but Captain of the City Watch was a flashier title. So I swapped the names and assigned Galana as my Captain of the City Watch with a monthly budget of 20 gold. In the organizational flow chart she answered directly to me. She was now responsible for law and order within the Malcum’s limits. She had permission to hire up to 20 full time town guards as well rule on any minor crimes herself.

Galana looked puzzled for a moment before kneeling before me. “Lord Tallis thank you for the esteemed position. I will discharge my duties to the best of my abilities!” She stood and crossed her right arm across her chest in salute.

“We are going to harvest some trees from the forest. Go find Sanso, he is working on the Enchanter’s Tower. You two should be able to guard me while I work on the opposite shore.” I gathered a few townsfolk to pull the logs across as well.

Soon I was on the far shore with Galana and Sanso as overwatch. They scared off two small parties of Darkskull goblins, injuring a few and killing five. The goblins were all level 45 and had terrible gear, nothing salvageable besides 20 to 40 silver coins each. I did take one wound for 354 damage so they were no joke. I felled 12 large trees before my axe durability gave out. I would need to get it to Manarag to get repaired. This should get us enough lumber for at least a week after it was milled.

It was late in the day as the townsfolk worked on the massive logs in the mill. Jaesmin brought me a late lunch and together with Sanso we checked on the Enchanter’s tower. Sanso had finished the three sub levels and with my guidance and spells we smoothed out his rough work. I returned to my residence with Jaesmin and she made dinner while I opened my town interface.

I needed to assign duties to a few townsfolk. I started with Elice. She was promoted to Master of Coins, a fancy title for the town’s banker. I gave her a 50 silver coin monthly wage. She would continue to run the general store as well. Next up was Sanso. I promoted him to High Wizard of Defense. It was a manufactured title on my and his duties were limited to construction of town buildings and aiding in defense. I did double his wage as well.

For Curraen I promoted him to Guild Master of Leathers. I gave him a pay boost and he now would oversee all tanners and leather workers in the city, granting the permits to practice their craft. I did the same for Manarag, Guild Master of Smiths. That was all I wanted to do in the interface tonight.

I started eating a baked chicken with vegetables that Jaesmin had prepared and it was actually seasoned! Tonight I wanted to draft a new residence for Galana and for our future giantkin. After eating I went to work on the plans. At least it would be just one set, both warriors would receive identical residences. It took only six hours before I was finished. It was a mix of using the interface and actual drafting work. I identified the plans.

*Rare Giantkin Townhouse, Health 8,000, Requires Masonry:Foundations 23, Masonry Structures: 23, Woodcraft: Caprentry 23 (+20% Bonus to Stamina, Health and Magic Regeneration for Giantkin race)*

That was fantastic! With the build bonus that might get over 30%! I wanted to work on a town hall administration building but the sun was already starting to crest. I think if me, Sanso and Jaesmin all worked together we could get both of these structures completed. I decided to put both structures near the center of town, adjacent to each other.

As we toiled the day away I found out the negative of assigning titles to NPCs in my growing village. They came to me with their problems. Galana was first. She wanted to establish a regular mounted patrol to the west. I had to open her interface and give her permissions to do so. Next was Curraen. He wanted me to set the fees for registering new leatherworkers and once again I just gave him the permissions to do so. This went on all day. Constant interruptions that required me to enter into the interface and give them permissions. I was fine with it as I needed to break to let my stamina and magic replenish but if this continued every day and every time I bestowed…oh!...light shines on marble head! My organizational flow chart had everyone reporting to me! Well lets fix that!

I decided the old woman I had met and who had passed on the responsibility of the village to me was going to be out Master of Guilds. All Guild Masters would have to go to her from now on. After doing this my day ran much smoother.

We finished both giantkin structures by the end of the day but I was feeling some fatigue having drained my magic and stamins so many times during the construction. Excitedly I analyzed the buildings.

*Rare Giantkin Townhouse, Health 16,700, +31% bonus to stamina, health and magic regeneration for giantkin race*

*Rare Giantkin Townhouse, Health 16,300, +32% bonus to stamina, health and magic regeneration for giantkin race*

Simba was nearby so I asked why the difference. We built the structures in parallel. He told me there was a multitude of factors. Most likely it was the differing quality of lumber used. I checked the wood with my lumberjack skill. Yes I could see that. Some of the supports on the unit with less health were slightly inferior. Ok, I would need to be more focused in the future. I had selected the best trees yesterday when I cut them down but the milling process had some variance. So many damn layers to this game!

Galana had arrived riding her horse with three other city guards mounted as well. “Hi Galana! This is your new house! You can pick either one!” I said hoping for a positive reaction. She cried instead. I nervously looked around until I realized it was tears of joy. She dismounted and gave me a massive hug before checking out both units and selecting the unit with the slightly higher recovery bonus. It was a good day!

The townsfolk were making requests for new residences as well but I just referred them to the Guild of Woodcrafters, which didn’t exist yet! Hopefully that confusion…my interface chimed and I opened the message, I had been promoted to the Guild Master of Woodcrafters by Gwen! Damn it! I would dump the title on someone who deserved it when I could and ignore the requests for now.

The townsfolk had a party in square that night and I was glad to see everyone including Manto who was smoking a pipe and drinking heartily. I retired with Jaesmin after putting in sufficient face time. That night my drafting efforts were to focus on a town administers office building. What should I design. Jaesmin sat at the table with me as I bounced ideas of her. Her feedback was limited due to he AI knowledge but it still was helpful.

I eventually went with a town hall concept. Its first floor would be a nice reception area with a guard station for six city guards. The second and third floors would contain 13 offices each for administrators. The building was going to be all stone. I didn’t know if my concept would work but I liked it in my head and put to drafting the plans.

*Rare City Hall, Health 80,000, Requires Masonry Foundations 23, Masonry Structures 43 (Bonus +12% to City Population Morale, +2% Tax Revenue)*

Oh the height of the building maybe? Did I have the skill to build this. I checked all my skills.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| ***Skill*** | ***Level*** |  |
| *Axe* | *13* | *Ag* |
| *Axe: Two Handed* | *15* | *Str* |
| *Air Magic* | *2* | *Chan* |
| *Air Magic: Force* | *2* | *Str* |
| *Air Magic: Lightning* | *1* | *Spd* |
| *Analyze* | *16* | *Int* |
| *Artistry: Carving* | *13* | *Chr* |
| *Artistry: Drafting (23)* | *42* | *Int* |
| *Cooking* | *6* | *Ag* |
| *Earth Magic* | *41* | *Mag* |
| *Earth Magic: Stone* | *41* | *Con* |
| *Laborer* | *17* | *Str* |
| *Leadership* | *18* | *Chr* |
| *Masonry* | *30* | *Str* |
| *Masonry: Foundations* | *29* | *Con* |
| *Masonry: Structures* | *24* | *Stam* |
| *Nature Magic* | *13* | *Mag* |
| *Nature Magic: Plant* | *13* | *Chan* |
| *Ranged* | *35* | *Ag* |
| *Reading: Common* | *3* | *Int* |
| *Riding: Land* | *40* | *Stam* |
| *Spirit Magic* | *2* | *Con* |
| *Spirit Magic: Life* | *2* | *Mag* |
| *Woodcraft* | *28* | *Chan* |
| *Woodcraft: Carpentry (23)* | *27* | *Luck* |
| *Woodcraft: Furniture* | *12* | *Char* |
| *Woodcraft: Lumberjack* | 7 | *Stam* |

I lacked the skill to build the building! My skills had jumped but I was behind. My best bet to raise it was to gain some levels and add my skill points from leveling to it. I really wanted to increase the ‘settlement’ to a ‘village’. It would give me two more bids in the NPC auction and as Simba had mentioned I had a cheat to adding powerful NPCs. As I was pondering this I got hit with a system wide alert.

*Worldwide Notification:* ***A Planer Incursion Event*** *will be Tested in 48 hours. A timer window is available to players. It is highly suggested you find refuge in large cities before the timer hits zero.*

What the fuck was that?

* *Finish the Inn*
* *Wood for shipwright*
* *Quest for goblins*
* *Build a house for the giantkin next to Galana’s*
* *Design and build an enchanter’s shop*
* *Train up Jaesmin*

*Ivory Ring of Deep Magic, +8 Magic, +2% total magic pool increase*

*Steel Ring of Fire Resistance, 30 Armor vs. Fire*

*Black and White Leather Belt of Channeling, +15 channeling*

*Blue Dragon Hide Belt, +50% damage with lightning spells*

*Cherry Wand of Fire, +25% damage with fire*

*Black Oak Wand of Focus, 10% magic reduction for all spells*

*Kahn’s Black Dragon Leather Saddle, +6 Riding Skill, +20% speed of mount, +20% damage with melee weapons, 50% less stamina drain on mount*

Earth elementals….

*Meld Wood Nature: Plant Tier 1, Magic Cost: 25, Effect: Integrate two pieces of wood that are in contact with each other, Casting Time: 10 seconds*

*Entrance to Crypt of the Phoenix King, Level 20, Floors 5, \*Scaling Dungeon\**

*Masonry 1 Tier 1 unlocked, +1 Strength, +2% health to structures*