Chapter 15

It was a four month project and it was June 7th and we were finally ready for the maiden voyage. It took a week to get enough crew and a captain. The ship sailed sloppy and the captain said I needed to move the bow water tanks all the way to the stern. A day later I finished the switch and the next sail was much better according to the captain. We still needed the cannons and marines. The mayor had been getting the cannons and just needed 9 more 24 pounders. We installed what he had gotten so far. I could make the cannons myself…maybe. I tried to make a long barrel breech loader 24 lb cannon. We tested it and not so great. I tried twice more and still had trouble getting the barrel smooth and straight. Eventually I got a stationary drill set up and had some success. Three cannons later and I had something. It took 14 more attempts to get 9 cannons. The breech cannons fired twice as fast as the muzzle loaders with prepared charges. The stone cannon also dissipated heat much faster. The ship was named the ***Galahad***.

By September we had the crew, marines, guns, supplies and 168 settlers. We set sail September 23rd, earlier than planned. The ship moved ok for its size. The captain was actually impressed with the ship. When we swung around the tip of Florida two small pirate ships came up on us. We did look like a fat merchant. The captain said the marines were green and the pirates were faster. We didn’t fire the stern guns. The pirate ships fired some 8 pound guns from both sides that bounced off the hull. We opened our gun ports and fired 6 cannons on each side. The port side had 3 hits, one destroyed the main mast. The starboard had 2 hits, punching two holes in the hull. They peeled off. The crew was totally happy. The captain said he needed to add 22 marines to man the guns in the future.

We ran along the gulf coast. I wasn’t quite sure were the bay for Houston was located. So we mapped the Bay…crudely and when we got to the area sort of where I thought it was we started looking. I was about 75% certain we found it and we got the settlers off the ship. I ended spending a month helping them set up stone shelters. The Galahad would bring them supplies and more settlers every 6 months. I thought about what to call the new city and finally decided of Excalibur, founded October 30th, 1671. I hoped it would allow me to get to California. I knew the Spanish were in the area as the were plundering south America. I hoped to get the California gold to grow my cities. We left the settlement with 7 stone buildings, 120 fruit trees and they had started trade with locals.

As we sailed out of the bay we hit a storm, a big fucking hurricane. We battened down the hatches and held on. The waves were massive and we were a bobber on the ocean. All crew was below decks. When the storm cleared the ship interior was a mess. Cannons were everywhere, food, supplies. It was just a mess. Half the crew had injuries. We raised sails and went south east to leave the gulf. We ended off course and came upon three Spanish ships. We hailed them for help and I showed the captain we tied to my writ from the king. He said I was a day from Havana, it was due east. They seemed friendly but while we were on deck getting my sailors tended to they started killing my men. The captain then shot me with a pistol point blank and I went overboard.

Damn that hurt. The ball hit me in the lung but barely broke the skin. In the water I transformed into a dolphin and stayed below the surface. I watched from a distance as they tossed my dead men overboard. It took the Spanish three hours to get crew onto my ship and another two hours to get sails up. Athena and Artemis were in my quarters and I had them stay where they were. I followed the ship to port and had to kill 3 sharks with stone bullet who got too close. The port had 2 other Spanish ships. I needed to plan my revenge. I decided to make some temporary golems. I swam down the beach and found some rock…it was hard to find rock. I molded six scary looking monkeys with bladed teeth. They were going to go to the Spanish ship and cut out the throats of the crew. That night I had them kill all the sailors on all 5 ships. The Galahad had seen a lot of attention and had over 100 people on board. The screams from the ships brought soldiers from the city. Dozens of them that were killed. I sent the monkeys to the shore and they killed more soldiers. After 3 hours the city was quiet with people boarding their doors or fleeing. I walked out of the water at dawn and down the dock. Someone shot at me and 20 seconds later the monkeys got him. I walked onto the Spanish ships. One straight warship. Two traders. And the last two were treasure ships from South America. The holds had Inca artifacts and mined gold and silver. With my monkeys watching the city I had Athena and Artemis move all the treasure to my ship and anything else I felt was valuable from all the ships. This took 20 hours. Then I burned the wooden Spanish ships. I wasn’t sure how the hell I was going to sail my ship. I planned to have Athena and Artemis tow it down the coast of Cuba. Well getting out the harbor at midnight took a few hours…towing was too slow so I had the monkeys set the fore sail. It was hard to steer the beast after adding 60 tons of loot. The trip was going to poorly as I did not know how to sail. A large Dutch merchant approached but with no one on deck veered off. Two weeks as I had finally passed the tip of Florida I saw four ships approaching. As they got closer they were definitely Spanish ships coming from Cuba. Spanish ships with a lot of guns. They swarmed the Galahad and started firing cannons at it. I was below deck and the thuds of balls hitting sounded like a massive drum. They were trying to sink me. Ah our later the bombardment stopped and looking out windows I saw one ship coming in close to grapple.

A hundred men swarmed to open deck. Below deck I waited. I shot the first man trying to head down then I went deeper in the ship. My monkeys waited and when 50 men surged below deck they emerged and slaughtered them. Less than ten made it back on deck and I had the monkeys emerge on deck and kill more and rush to the ship tied to us and go below deck immediately and start killing. There were now 100 men in shock on the deck of the two ships with screams coming from below their ship. I waited with Athena and Artemis in case they came below. Instead men started jumping in the water and swimming to another ship. I had a monkey run out and up to the crow nest. Immediately gunfire erupted from other ships trying to hit it. I snuck into the water on a blindside and transformed into dolphin bringing a bag of stones. I swam to the far side of the farthest ship and climbed up to the gun port and peeked in. the men inside were focused on the battle 200 yards away. I slipped my naked form inside. I moved toward the stern and found the gunpowder locker. A soldier noticed me and I cast thermal stone on the bag and tossed it inside. A few shots rang toward me and two hit. My skin was bruised but not broken as I pushed out to nearest cannon port. Hitting the water I transformed and dove deep. The explosion rang my ears and dazed me slightly. Recovering I moved to another ship grabbing a rock on the bottom. Getting to the stern I shifted and shoved a thermal stone into cracks. They would probably be able to control the fire. The fourth ship was already making to get away. I got back to the Galahad and climbed aboard. Accessing the situation there were 15 men on my ship barricaded in the captains dining room. The attached ship was clear of people. There were 50 men in the water. The ship that exploded had sunk and there were more people in water over there. My fire had been successful but as I thought it was almost under control. I had Athena stop tossing bodies in the water on the attached ship, Artemis did the same on the Galahad. I searched the new ship and it was also a treasure ship. The hold was 60% full of valuables, gold, silver and artifacts. What was going on? I went and knocked on the cabin where 15 men hiding and fortunately someone spoke English. They were scarred and offered the info I wanted. There was a fleet of 14 Spanish ships, 10 had treasure. They were coming from South America, resupplying at ports in various Caribbean cities and then heading to Spain. They attacked my ship because they got news from Havana of natives capturing a ship. My monkeys were called natives? I stripped the Spanish ship of treasure and cannons. It had taken me a while to find the wreck from the exploded ship as the Galahad had drifted. It also had treasure in about 50 feet of water. I wasn’t sure what to do so just created 4 light stones and stuffed them in the wreck. I briefly thought about leaving a golem with the sunken treasure but passed. The other ship with the stern fire was franticly working in getting new rigging to its rudder and a new rudder and was 1 mile away. Night came and I delivered two monkeys to the ship that was getting close to fleeing. Soon screams started coming. I returned to my ship. I then had to negotiate with my captives. The 15 men agreed to sail my ship if I didn’t kill them. I said they would be transported to the city of Lancelot and could work and live there. The agreed. I cut loose the gutted ship and we sailed and grappled to the other ship. My men watched as my golems stripped this ship too. I had 288 extra cannons and my cargo hull and passenger cabins where full of loot. My 15 sailors would stay in the stern castle. it took 5 days to get to Camelot. We crashed into the small pier but managed to tie off. I went and got the mayor to jail my 15 sailors. He also arranged to bring them to Lancelot as I promised. Next I ordered crates to be built. I would store what I could in my warehouse. With just two golems it took a week to get everything to the warehouse and I filled both floors. I transferred the 288 Spanish cannons to the city. They were to build 4 cannon batteries to protect the city. The sailors I lost families got two years wages from me and I told them they were killed by the Spanish but I avenged them. I told the mayor my next crew for the Galahad was to be 120 soldiers and 80 marines. He said he would need 4 months to get that many together. That was fine, and he was to get supplies and settlers for the Excalibur colony.

It was December 5th, 1671 and I had enemies, the English and Spanish. The English were already in trouble but the new Spanish king had chosen to not uphold the non-aggression pact. I did have a map from the captured ships and logs where the treasure loaded from. There were two major cities with about 70,000 inhabitants between them. They were supplied by mines stretching south and to a much smaller extent plunder. Most of the cities had already been ransacked. My best course was to just hurt the Spanish shipping by burning ships. I selected six ports in the Caribbean and seven in South America. I would fly there and do my damage and fly back. I could make 300 miles a day in eagle form without straining if I wasn’t going into a head wind. The monkey golems were disconnected and buried behind the warehouse. I had so much silver and gold to transport to Avalon. I spent 3 days building a massive cart out of stone. Big enough to hold 6000 lbs of goods. I loaded the Inca and Aztech artifacts in the first load. Athena and Artemis had difficulty pulling the wagon but we managed to get to Avalon in 5 days.

I had four new new children. Carina had twins again, Leo and Luke born on August 7th, 1671. They were very strong in magic too. Ella had a son too, Damien born August 16th, 1671. I was surprised to learn Colette had a daughter since I didn’t know she was pregnant. Her daughter was Gilli and was born October 7th, 1671. She had some magic so she was probably mine. Colette had only come to my bed a handful of times and it was a so-so experience for both of us no matter how hard I tried. The tower was getting overrun with kids. I held off talking to Amelia. I talked with Riona first and she gave me her assessment sheet of my children, I just scanned the other 13 women she was teaching and focused on my kids.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Born | Ability Pool | Magic Pool | Affinities |
| Me |  | 105 | 170 | Stone, Nature |
| Riona | 6/27/1654 | 16 | 14 | Fire |
| Carina | 9/1/1646 | 7 | 6 | Gravity |
| Daphne | 12/23/1666 | 10 | 24 | Nature, Water |
| Caleb | 3/28/1667 | 34 | 60 | Darkness, Space |
| Dana | 3/28/1667 | 37 | 54 | Light, Fire |
| Liam | 7/17/1667 | 18 | 30 | ???Necromancy |
| Ava | 8/5/1667 | 2 | 14 | Prismic |
| Dahlia | 10/16/1668 | 62 | 48 | Metal, Ice |
| Orion | 11/11/1668 | 7 | 27 | Air |
| Violet | 11/23/1668 | 9 | 29 | Space |
| Able | 7/27/1670 | 56 | 30 | Healing, Nature, Water |
| Summer | 8/20/1670 | 14 | 24 | Lightning |
| Leo | 8/7/1671 | 32 | 70 | Gravity, Stone |
| Luke | 8/7/1671 | 32 | 68 | Gravity, Stone |
| Gilli | 10/7/1671 | 26 | 7 | Divination |

She even had assessed the new babes. Riona said I should search for someone else who resonates with me magically like Carina. The power of the children was really strong. She also estimated that a person could only double their ability pool…going beyond causes instability to the mage core shell. She wasn’t sure if there was a limit to the magic pool as it could be organized and compressed. Wow she probably understood magic much better than me. Riona also had a lover now, Noelle. I was happy for her. She asked if I would father them children if they decided they wanted children. It would be weird but I agreed as it would make her happy…maybe just with Noelle…no that wouldn’t be fair to Riona…well maybe by the time she wanted a child she would have a different father in mind.

I ignored Amelia requests to meet but made her 10,000 coins in the week I was in Avalon. Athena and Artemis were focused on getting carts of goods from my warehouse in Camelot and when they were done they would work on Hogwarts. I borrowed the other golems to excavate a large hill 300 yards north of the tower, then I built a massive thick walled stone warehouse in the hill and then buried it by covering it in a few yards on earth. I would store the loot and my considerable alcohol collection. During the week I found that Renee had started a culinary school at the college which I was proud of her for doing. I made a leather satchel that I could roll up and carry in my talons and with maps and clothes that wasn’t too heavy. Before I left I did talk with Amelia and Collette. Things were going well and I was wasn’t going to get caught up in the bureaucracy, I needed to stunt the Spanish before they organized retribution. My goal was to give rise the Cthulhu mythos. The flight wasn’t as bad as I thought it would be. I flew to Excalibur first. They had lost 7 settlers. They were running low on some food items so I planted and fruited some more trees. I followed the coast after to my first target. The town had about 2000 residents and I camped a few miles away to make a new golem. It turned into a gorilla with glowing red eyes and red teeth. That night the golem attacked the village while I watched in panther form. There were no ships at the docks so I just wanted the golem to kill the soldiers and anyone else who attacked. His goal was to be seen as well to create fear. That night 39 Spanish died. The next attack was 75 miles south the next night, 78 killed. The golem even got hit with a small cannon and had a minor repair needed. We continued attacking and moving on. I didn’t have much to do other burn two ships in the first week. Then we closed in on the two port cities that filtered gold and silver to Spain. Two regular merchant ships were in port and the city atmosphere was tense. Word had reached them of the Cthulhu. My Spanish was weak but I walked into town and listened to people. They were preparing for the beast, setting up cannons in the city, giving people more weapons.

I spent two days in the city learning the area. In the market I purchased a bunch of seeds, I was sure I had found rubber tree seeds, coffee and cocoa. I would have to build a greenhouse in Avalon. There were two forts, one inland that stored the gold and silver until treasure ships came from Spain. The last departure was 2 months ago and they were six months from having enough to fill two ships. There were 500 soldiers stationed here. The other fort was in the bay that had numerous cannons and 200 men. I decided I would skip the city for now. We hit two smaller cities and then found the next city had 2 warships and hundreds of soldiers. They had predicated my linear movements and this was their attempt to kill the monster. I decided to make a second Cthulhu monster. This one was pale white from the stone I used and the eyes glowed green. I had the original attack and get ambushed and hit by hundreds of rounds and cannon shots. It then faked death. The Spanish had lost around 60 men and they were cheering in the night. As they finished I howled in my wolf form as loud as I could. The men went silent. Then I had my other golem climb up on the wall. The soldiers were frozen in fear. Then I had the downed golem stand. It had a crack and had lost a finger. I howled again and both golems attacked while I went to sink the ships…

Over a thousand men died and both warships sunk in the bay. I waited a week before my next attack. I spent my time in a town listening to the growing fear. Everyone thought the soldiers had injured the monsters and that was why they hadn’t attacked. We made hollow rock boat with oars and I had them row to Cuba. We hit Havana, 200+ soldiers and 3 warships sunk. We wreaked havoc down the length of Cuba. Then we crossed to Haiti and continued. I spent two weeks on the island and the ships no longer anchored in ports overnight. I moved to Jamaica next and didn’t commit any attacks but the monsters did make an appearance at night. I returned to South America with the golems and found the second port city that stored silver and gold for transport to Spain. It was a similar setup to the first horde town. They had enough silver for three ships currently in their warehouse according to the men I talked to. The warehouse was very close to the port. I decided to burn down the city. As an eagle at night a kept dropping hundreds of thermal stones across the city and the four ships in port. When the place was burning merrily I released the golems. They only attacked people who attacked them. Once the town people fled I moved all the warehouse contents into the ocean, 200 yards from shore and 40 yards deep. It was 60% silver bars, 35% copper bars and 5% gold coins. They must be mining and smelting. I guessed about 15 tons total! It took most of the night and morning to move the metals. We burned and attacked two more towns. Then I went to the horde town I had skipped 2 months ago. The town was packed and ships in the harbor were loading people to return to Spain. I was a little shocked. In a tavern I was eating a meal with some decent beer and estimated I had sank 24-26 merchant ships, 12-14 warships , killed 5,000 soldiers, 3,000 sailors and 500 civilians. I heard two merchant captains talking and broke into their conversation for info since they were speaking English. I learned the Spanish king was sending 40 warships and 3500 soldiers to hunt the Cthulhu. There was a 20,000 gold bounty on it and a castle and lands in Spain. The fleet was scheduled to arrive in two months. That night I burned the city, sank 5 ships and moved the warehouse offshore 100 meters down. The warehouse had a lot of gold, over 2 tons in gold bars and 2 tons in stamped coins. There was a few crates of stamped silver coins and a few tons of copper and silver bars. I needed to find where they were stamping these coins and mining. I moved inland for the first time burning Spanish villages and terrorizing them. When I found the large city I made plans. I burned the city over two nights then attacked with the golems the next night. There was a vault was 4 tons of gold and silver. We were 100 miles from the coast but I decided to bury the gold inside a rock outside the city. This took some time but the rock was on a hill and should never get touched. I grew some trees to hid the tracks of the golems. Ok I felt I had done enough here. Next was to intercept the Spanish fleet. I returned to Cuba with the golems and attacked Havana, burning it down. I moved on to the Bahamas and just burned two ships at sea. On the northern end of the island I built a stone house and waited. The golems were buried under the sand. My house grew into a lighthouse over the next month. I used my eagle form to scout waiting for the arrival. Maybe the rumors were false…it was late August and besides getting a nice tan I wasn’t doing well. Two ships that had come ashore for water had confirmed the Spanish were sending a massive fleet. Then it came…the first week of September a small trader docked for water and said a 30+ Spanish fleet was coming. Two days later in eagle form I spotted them. It had 12 massive warships, 14 smaller warships and 11 trade ships all flying the Spanish flag. I set up 80 bags of stones on my roof, the ships would pass 15 miles away. It was going to be a long night. My first trip I dropped stones on two of the big warships. I rushed back and started making trips. I got all 26 warships burning in 7 hours. I was torn on whether to burn the merchants. In the end I decided not to. they might have children colonists. This hit to ships and soldiers should be a huge blow. It was time to go home. I buried the golems 10 yards deep near the house and disconnected them from my pool, letting them sleep until needed again.