Chapter 7

I reached the pool and set up my tent, or at least watched it erect. It inflated and I could see the interior frame clicking into place. When it was done I clicked the camo setting having the black tent shift to a mix of greens and browns mimicking the local scenery. Entering the tent I found it was lightly pressurized and although the bunks, table and chair looked flimsy they were sturdy. I realized I didn’t have a mattress and hoped sleeping on a hard surface wouldn’t be too uncomfortable. I went into the dungeon and quickly cleared some areas and the two mini-bosses. My new force shield made everything ridiculously easy as long as I was only facing one opponent. The dungeon creatures were not able to get past it and it helped my spell casting a lot maintaining it and casting another spell. It took a lot of concentration to do so. My loot was a fedora looking hat and scarlet slippers. I would have Cael identify them when we met up again.

Both items would go into my sell bin for now. I recharged in the Aether pool then went to the tent. While preparing dinner I opened my sheets and checked things out. Teleport, Time and Space had all reached level 3, all in just 16 hours or so of maintaining my dimensional space. Force magic had reached level 4 though and that was just from a dozen or casts of mage hand and four hours of combat with my personal force shield spell. I also had some spell tailoring to do! Personal Dimensional Pocket was level 4 and force shield was level 3.

Personal Dimensional Pocket Spell Tailoring: Level 1, Tier 1

* “Improve Cast” – reduce spell Aether cost by 10%
* “Improve Space” – increase base space by 10%

It was a tough choice. I could release the spell and recast it and get back 20 aether to my pool if I selected the first option. The space was already increasing by 1% for each spell level but I would have to recast it to gain the 4% improvement. I also had another two improvements coming after this one. I selected the improve cast option.

Personal Dimensional Pocket Spell Tailoring: Level 2, Tier 2

* “Flash” – can create a small flash of light when objects are put into and removed from pocket
* “Improve Space” – increase base space by 11%

Neat effect but I am more utilitarian and selected option 2 improving the space.

Personal Dimensional Pocket Spell Tailoring: Level 3, Tier 3

* “Faster Casting” – reduce casting time by 15 seconds
* “Sphere” – your storage space can be a sphere instead of a cube
* “Improve Space” – increase space by 8%

I choose the improve space option again. I removed everything from the space, cancelled the spell then recast the spell with 180 Aether. My pocket space was now 2.46 cubic meters. I moved onto the shield spell.

Personal Force Shield Spell: Level 1, Tier 1

* “Improve Speed” – shield moves 20% faster
* “Improve Size” – shield increase to 1.25 meters
* “Improved Casting Speed” – reduce casting time by 1 second

All good options. The shield speed and size were all great in the dungeon. The reduction in casting time was a 33% improvement and I thought it would be best to have faster cast time in an emergency – option 3 it was.

Personal Force Shield Spell: Level 2, Tier 2

* “Improve Toughness” – shield toughness improves by 21%
* “Visible Shield” – shield can become opaque blue

Well having the shield visible might help if I was in team combat but since I could already see the outline of the shield I didn’t feel it necessary. It gave me a quick idea. I cast the shield and tried to stand on it – float as it were. It slowly sank to the ground. Guess I wouldn’t be riding it like a surf board. I had the flight spell anyway. I improved the toughness.

Personal Force Shield Spell: Level 3, Tier 3

* “Improve Size” – shield increase to 1.22 meters
* “Sound Resound” – shield can sound like metal being hit when struck

Yeah the effects were cool and all but a bigger shield sounded better. I selected option 1.

Spell improvements done I practiced orbiting summoned stone spheres with mage hand. I was able to focus enough to orbit 4 stone spheres before I lost focus. I was then prompted with a new skill which I couldn’t learn anyway. Multi-Casting Skill. I could currently cast and maintain 4 spells…maybe 5 if the dimensional pocket spell counted. I would have to ask Leo.

I was tired but sleep was not great, definitely needed to pack a mattress next time.

In the morning I left the tent set up and locked it. I figured I could use my direction sense cantrip to get back here if I got lost. I also wanted the space in my pocket in case I found something worthwhile. Being as observant as possible since I was alone I moved using fleet footed. My first interesting encounter besides the collecting of flora and mushrooms was about seven miles away. It was an old stone structure ruin, probably a house foundation. It was very old and the trees laid a canopy over it and small shrubs and vines grew throughout. It was about 10 meters by 6 meters. As I got closer it was definitely a collapsed building. I went through the rubble and found some skeletons, the skull looked human. Then I found something not human. The skeleton wore a black/gray one piece suit that looked like plastic. The heavy skull had large lower fangs. It was an orc…I just knew it. I approached the skeleton and a system message popped up causing me to almost shit my pants. I had brain farted and forgot this was a magical world and I had thought the orc skeleton had come alive. I read the message from the system.

*System Quest: Father’s Last Wish*

*Warleader Dul’Morth Gerrn crashed on this planet 102 years ago. He was the only survivor of his ship. Heavily injured he found his way here to a small homestead where he killed the residents. While he was dying he wished on the SYSTEM to fulfill his last wish. Give his crew mates the Gerrn burial rite. In his crew where his son and two of his daughters. Rewards: One free skill from the following list: Starship Engineering, Long Blades, Gambling or Starship Gunner.* *+2 Primary Stat Points.* *5,000 experience*. *Accept (Y/N)*

A few problems with this quest. First the bastard had killed the people who lived here. Second what the hell was the Gerrn burial rite? Third where the hell was the crashed ship from 102 years ago? Well no big deal for now. I was able to quickly bury the human skeletons using my stone magic. I avoided the orc skeleton for now as I searched the rest of the rubble. Nothing useful.

Ok, back to the orc. I pulled the suit out and brought all the bones together and placed them in a stone box I created. Underneath the suit was a silvery long blade. It had the shape of a katana but was longer than the typical Japanese sword. The grip was soft and molded to my hands. The bright silvery blade had script running down it and I wondered if it was magical. I couldn’t sense anything from it. I found the sheath for the blade and put it to the side. I wasn’t sure if I would take it or bury it with the orc warrior. The suit was big and had a few tares on it. The boots were separate. The condition after 102 years was too bad, all considering. I tried putting the boots on and using my clean clothes cantrip. The boots which had been a little large shunk a tiny bit and polished up. I cast the spell six times, each time the boots became a slightly better fit, repairing themselves closer to fitting my body. I now had a great pair of orc war boots. I sent my NIKE sneakers into my dimensional pocket. Now the suit… I put it on feeling a little grossed out. It was too big. I began casting the clean clothes spell. It took nine total casts for the magic to resize, repair and clean the suit. I found the suit had a forearm computer that was without power. It had two belt compartments but they were both empty. It had a thigh pocket that had a pair of 20 cm long black cylinders side by side. After playing with it for a bit I found the cylinders pulled apart with a clear plastic sheet between. When it reached 20 cm the plastic went rigid and the clear plastic went black to form a screen. I was shocked the battery still worked but it didn’t matter as the text was in a foreign language. I swore aloud…the screen flashed and the text began to change to English line by line. Well damn. After two minutes the device informed me its contents were now available in English. I put the device back in the thigh pocket for now. I would look at it more in the comfort and safety of the tent.

I moved the orc remains in the stone box to my pocket space. I searched the rest of the area where the orc was found and found a heavy rifle buried a little bit under the dirt. It was covered in dirt. Holding it and casting my cleanse spells didn’t help it either I had to be wearing something or it didn’t work on hand held items. I sent it to my dimensional space to appraise later. I looked for another hour for anything of value before leaving and heading back to the Aether pool and my tent. I was sweating quite a bit and had to cast cleanse body every hour or so and drink a lot water.

In the tent I felt secure enough to play with the alien computer and removed the suit. The data pad seemed to recognize voice queries so I started asking it questions. Was this device made by the orcs…NO. This device was purchased from SYSTEM TERMINAL 29P-C671. Huh, a device made by the SYSTEM. What was this devices purpose? It was setup as an engineering data device for the orc vessel Ven’yer. What could this device do? It had diagnostic and repair manuals to aid the ships engineer. How was the battery still working? The device was powered by Aether crystals and had about 1900 hours of ‘battery life left’. When the device was turned off it didn’t drain any power. I brought up the ships schematics on the device. The ship looked like a flattened bullet when I zoomed out. It was 27.4 meters long, 12.4 meters wide and 8 meters high. I asked where the hell the ship was and the device responded by showing a map with an X on it and a green icon away from it. The green icon ended up being me. So I had directions to the ship. I walked outside and after orienting myself found the X on the map was probably in the mountains about 30 miles away.

I went back inside and tried asking about Gerrn burial rite. The device chimed up and said the data was not stored on the device and would cost 10 SYSTEM credits to purchase. Crap I didn’t have any SYSTEM credits. I asked if there was any ‘balance’ of system credits from the previous owner. The device said there were approximately 190 remaining credits on the Aether crystal powering the device. After a little back and forth apparently the SYSTEM data pad had a galactic wi-fi link and could download data for a price. I agreed to the price for the data. After a few seconds the screen lit up and a short documentary played of the device showing the Gerrn burial rite. It was simple. The bones were burned with family members speaking the great deeds of the fallen. Then there was an orc poem that took about five minutes to recite. The ashes of the fallen were then smeared on the foreheads of all present to symbolize taking a piece of the fallen with you for eternity. I reopened the quest and accepted it. I then proceeded to perform the rite for the orc warrior. I retrieved the names of his children from a journal of the data pad. For the part about his life I just mentioned that he was the proud father of Vern’ish, Chr’as and Chrad’sku. I had the data pad play the audio of the orc poem then repeated it aloud. The language reminded me of Klingon from the Star Trek shows I watched growing up. It took a while for the bones to be burned in the stone box. I took some ash and rubbed it on my forehead completing the ceremony. The system screen opened and I read the text.

*Hidden Quest Completed: The Warrior Father’s Final Rest*

*The warleader only cared about his children’s and crew’s final rest. But having giving him his own final rite and rest you can receive double the rewards for completing Father’s Last Wish quest.*

Hell yes. And it couldn’t be too hard of a quest, just needed to follow the map to the crashed ship. Perform the orc rite a few times and bam I would be done. I paid 10 more system credits for info on the suit I had secured.

Basic Orc Spacesuit

Manufacturer/Model: Brac’Tril Industries/BL21A

Weight: 4.6 kilograms

Armor Class: Light

Special Resistances: Cold +15%, Vacuum +40%, Fire +20%, Energy +15%, Slashing +15%

Power: System Battery Type A

History/Design: The first orc empire created many variants of space suits. This suit was primarily designed for pilots and engineers who need a high degree of mobility and flexibility. It has two storage pouches on the legs, two small waist pouches and two magnetic clips on hips for tools or weapons. A standard communication computer is located on the right forearm. The boots have semi-mag locks for walking in zero gravity. The helmet has linked display but no sensors. The helmet also carries a 60 minute oxygen solid state canister. An Orc can last about 40 minutes in space in this suit before freezing. There is a supplemental backpack that can added that includes micro thrusters, power to heat the suit for 6 hours and adds an additional 5 hours of oxygen.

SYSTEM PURCHASE VALUE: 1575 credits

Apparently my suit was missing its helmet. It think it looked pretty good, molding and highlighting my muscles. I found the system battery in the forearm near the computer. It released easily and looked like a solid red popsicle stick with some circuits on it. I would have to get a few of these. Ok I needed to make some decisions. I wanted to try to solo clear the dungeon tomorrow to get the Dungeon Soloist Title Cael mentioned. Originally I wasn’t going to challenge the boss but with how effective my shield had shown itself to be and how my new orc armor gave me some above average protection I was fairly confident. I planned to completely clear all the monsters and mini-bosses before taking on the boss. That way I could be sure to have no fear of getting attacked if I had to flee. Then I would decide after that if I would wait for Cael to go to the ship or just go by myself.

Entering the dungeon the next day I had my pistol on my hip magnetic lock. I found the sword sheath did go on the magnetic lock as well but I didn’t know how to wield it and kind of got in the way being so long. I decided to utilize my shield as much as possible and was tempted to take the Shield skill when I had an available slot. I was started my killing spree working back and forth across the cavern. The light armor suit was great. I never lost more than 10% of my health in an encounter and that was fighting four monsters at once. After an estimated 60% completed I had to withdraw and recharge my Aether in the pool. Returning I killed the mini-bosses and the rest of the generic monsters. I got another pair of socks and a pair of boots for loot from the mini-bosses. My Aether was at 20% so I recharged again, it was night and floating in the pool at night was a little creepy. Only one of the moons was in the sky. I was tired but I had to take my shot at the boss before the monsters respawned. I returned and stared down the large frog king. I cast flight, my shield and pulled my Aether Pistol. I turned up the power to 3 and floated closer. Maybe I had planned on fleet footed instead as it had better movement speed? I aimed the pistol and flew at it…I waited till it noticed me then opened fire using *called shot*. One Shot. Two Shots. Three Shots. Dead. That was…easy. Before reaching the boss to collect the loot I got the notification I was hoping for.

*Title Bestowed: Dungeon Soloist I (next tier at 20 soloed dungeons – each must be different dungeons)*

*Title Equipped Bonus: +10% bonus damage when in a dungeon*

*Achievement Reward: +1 to all primary stats*

*Hidden Reward: +5 free primary stats for complete clear*

Wow the hidden reward was awesome. I added all 5 to intellect…basically I was using the bonus stats to get another spell slot. I then proceeded to collect my loot. My small Aether crystal, 20 copper coins and a heavy black shirt. I added everything to my dimensional space and left the dungeon. Before going to my tent I topped off my Aether in the pool. I also thought that maybe if I stored the Aether pool water in my dimensional space it would last longer than a 12 hours of viability. I decided to test it out and pulled out a cooking pot from my pocket space filled it with water and returned it.

I rested in the tent on the hard bed. I was planning to open and review an update my sheet but I was so tired I fell asleep immediately.

When I woke I opened my sheet and found I was level 4. I had turned off auto notifications when I was in combat so I had not been aware. I confirmed the level up and sent the two stat points to intellect. I then opened my skill sheet.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Next Skill Slot at Level 5 |  | Unused Skill Points: 6 | | |
|  | ***Skill*** | ***Level*** | ***Tier*** | **Percent Next Lvl** | **Stat** |
|  | *Spellcraft (Primary)* | *15* | *7* | 9% | *Chan* |
|  | *Spirit Magic (Secondary)* | *2* | *2* | 85% | *Aeth* |
|  | *Mind Shield* | *3* | *3* | 69% | *Int* |
|  | *Sense Psionics* | *2* | *2* | 89% | *Chan* |
|  | *Earth Magic* | *7* | *5* | 7% | *Aeth* |
|  | *Stone Magic (Secondary)* | *14* | *7* | 69% | *Con* |
|  | *Order Magic* | *2* | *2* | 18% | *Aeth* |
| 1 | *Marksman* | *11* | *6* | 31% | *Agil* |
| 2 | *Cooking* | *4* | *3* | 30% | *Agil* |
| 3 | *Aether Cultivation* | *9* | *5* | 40% | *Chan* |
| 4 | *Air Magic* | *7* | *5* | 36% | *Aeth* |
| 5 | *Alchemy* | *8* | *5* | 11% | *Int* |
| 6 | *Botany* | *7* | *5* | 62% | *Int* |
| 7 | *Mycology* | *7* | *5* | 43% | *Int* |
| 8 | *Water Magic* | *4* | *3* | 18% | *Aeth* |
| 9 | *Sculptor* | *5* | *4* | 44% | *Chr* |
| 10 | *Supplemental Aether Core* | *9* | *5* | 15% | *Aeth/Chan* |
| 11 | *Teleport Magic* | *5* | *4* | 12% | *Int* |
| 12 | *Time Magic* | *5* | *4* | 12% | *Chan* |
| 13 | *Space Magic* | *5* | *4* | 12% | *Aeth* |
| 14 | *Force Magic* | *7* | *5* | 55% | *Str* |

I had two boons to pick, one Earth Magic and one for Force Magic. I was feeling pretty good about myself. The first thing I decided was to remove my secondary skill statuses. The screen asked me to confirm.

*You have chosen move Stone Magic and Spirit Magic from secondary skill status. You can select new skills to become secondary skills after 7 days.*

Well that is about what I was expecting. I figured I had failed to utilize Spirit Magic and Stone Magic had run its course with my new Magic spheres. I was fairly certain I would choose Supplemental Aether Core and Force Magic.

Ok boon time!

*Stone Magic Boon Selection:*

* *“Quick Caster” – All stone magic spells have a 20% casting time reduction*
* *“Free Spell” – Gain a free spell slot for a stone magic spell which will be a secondary spell*
* *“Spell Recognition” – Know the specifics of all stone magic spells being cast in your line of sight*
* *“Heavy Impact” – do 18% more damage with all stone magic spells*

Crap nothing I would deem spectacular like the flight spell I received from air magic. Option 1 was not too great. Option 2 was not great…I was investing in intellect to open up spell slots. Option 3…I mean how often would I be going against a stone mage in combat? Option 4…I was planning to move away from my stone bullet spell to the Aether pistol in the future. I decided on the free spell and had a spell list appeared in the screen. Oh! I would get to choose the spell right now! This was not too bad. I had dozens of spells up to tier 5 to choose from! I forgot I had access to bigger and better spells. I started going through the list. There was a version of the summon stone spell that was tier five but with my spell tailoring my spell was already superior. There was a tier 5 spell called boulder shot which must the high level stone bullet spell. Ok I needed to find something useful…Compress Earth to Stone, Dispel Stone, Change Stone…I decided to close this for now. Maybe a situation would come up and I could select a spell to help then. I moved onto the next boon.

*Force Magic Boon Selection:*

* *“Improved Spell Efficiency” – Force Magic Spells require 16% less mana to cast*
* *“Improved Spell Duration” – for all relevant force spells the duration increases by 24%*

Ok I didn’t get any awesome here either. I wasn’t hurting for Aether but I figured future spells might have a high cost so I selected improved spell efficiency.

Onto Spell Tailoring. I looked at my spell list to see my progress.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Next Spell Slot at Intellect 45 | | | Unused Spell Points: 6 | |
|  | ***Spell*** | ***Level*** | ***Rank*** | **Percent Next Level** | **Tier** |
|  | *Heal Other* | *4* | *3* | 4% | *1* |
|  | *Summon Stone (Primary)* | *12* | *6* | 36% | *1* |
|  | *Stone Bullet (Secondary)* | *13* | *7* | 55% | *1* |
|  | *Flight* | *Special* | *Special* | NA | *5* |
|  | *(ADD STONE MAGIC SPELL)* |  |  |  |  |
| 1 | *Create Water* | *6* | *4* | 91% | *1* |
| 2 | *Aether Respiration* | *6* | *4* | 15% | *3* |
| 3 | *Personal Dimensional Pocket* | *6* | *4* | 9% | *1* |
| 4 | *Personal Force Shield* | *7* | *5* | 2% | *1* |
| 5 |  |  |  |  |  |
| 6 |  |  |  |  |  |
| 7 |  |  |  |  |  |
| 8 |  |  |  |  |  |
| Psionic | *Fortress Mind* | *2* | *2* | 55% | *2* |

For the stone bullet spell I increased base damage by 32% over increasing its range. For dimensional pocket I increased the space by 17% over added decreasing the cool down time by 1 second for moving objects in and out of the space. Force personal force shield I had two opportunities. The first one I added 2 minutes to the spells duration. The second option I increased the shields movement speed by 40% over the ability to instant cast the spell one per day. The spell only had a 2 second cast time so I wasn’t worried about the instant cast option but secretly hoped it would come up again. I had found how effective the shield was in combat and the added speed would be extremely useful against multiple opponents.

I had planned to have some hot breakfast but I had used all my cooking fuel to incinerate the bones of the warleader. I checked on the Aether water after the 12 hour period from the pool and to my disappointment it had lost its effectiveness. I guessed Aether stood outside of time or something so even though it was in the pocket space it still dissipated? Oh well.

I packed everything up including the tent. I was going to hold off on recasting the pocket space in order to conserve my Aether for now. I had to dump some common mushrooms from the space for everything to fit but was not worried about it.

I headed toward the ships location using the fleet footed spell. I wasn’t being as observant and a forest cat did jump me. Its claws were not able to pierce the suit and it only took one shot at high power from the pistol to heavily injury it. I backed away and finished it with stone bullet spells. I cast danger sense to hopefully prevent this from happening again and put in the back of my mind to always have this spell active going forward. As I moved this time every 50-60 minutes my danger sense would alert me to a potential predator. I stayed on high alert until the feeling faded. I had no other encounters and reached the base of the mountains.

Checking the map I still had 6 or so miles to go. I ate a cold lunch before heading into the mountains. It was not easy climbing and I utilized the flight spell when I got too tired or the terrain became too rough. I reached the summit of a mountain and looked at the view. It was pretty amazing. On one side the forest spread out and the other side mountains obscured my view. Some of the higher mountains had some white peaks indicating snow. I had about 3 miles to the crash site but it was getting dark so I found a sheltered ledge further down and set up the tent. I had to summon a stone wall to act as a wind screen because the tent startled to wobble a little when the wind gusted, so much for a sheltered ledge. After using my spells to clean up myself and I ate a large cold meal. Sleep came easy after I used cultivation to top off my Aether pool.

I quickly looked over my sheet the next morning. Nothing great had leveled up the previous day. I continued on the rough journey and it took two more hours to reach the associated spot on the map. It was a quarter the way up a fairly large mountain on a somewhat gradual slope. There was no ship in sight. Damn. Maybe the ship broke apart and just the central computer was buried here somewhere? Or whatever the data pad used to lock on for a signal. I used the map and summoned a easily identified rocks to mark off the area. A shallow 3 meter wide stream ran through the area and it was a big area. The ship, shaped like a bullet must have buried in the mountain when it crashed. The question was how deep? I spent six hours using summon stone to create a channel for the stream and then damming off the stream and diverting it away. It took over two thousand mana to complete the feat. I then created a smooth platform for the tent and erected it and activated the camouflage. I wasn’t sure if there were spy satellites or people mapped ground activity on this planet but I was now assuming I might have a complete ship and didn’t want anyone taking my prize.

Sitting at the table in the tent I went through my spell options for my free secondary stone spell. I found excavate, superior excavate and dispel stone seemed my best options. I spent some credits on the pad to review the spells on the SYSTEM database. Excavate was a tier 1 earth and stone spell that could remove earth stone at the cost of 100 aether per cubic meter. Dispel stone cost only 20 aether but could dispel summoned stone up to 1 cubic meter per cast. Guess it was meant as a spell to clean up messes from reckless stone mages. The superior excavate spell was a tier 5 earth and stone spell. It cost 500 aether and could remove 27 cubic meters per cast. That seemed like the best option…it was more than five times as effective for the Aether cost than the tier 1 spell.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Superior Excavate** | 1 (Secondary Spell) |
| Magic Sphere | Earth (tier 5), Stone (tier 5) |
| Mana Cost | 500 |
| Range | 4 meters |
| Effect | Eliminates earth and stone from a 3 meter cube (+6%) |
| Casting Time | 190 seconds |
| Duration | Permanent |
| Leveling Effect | minor increase to area to be excavated |
| Level 7 Boon: | Not reached |
| Removes 27 cubic meters of earth and stone. | |

For my spell tailoring at level 1 I increased the size of the earth by 6%.

I walked to the dry stream bed and cast the spell and make a pit. As the spell was cast over the three minutes I was able to scan the earth and stone in the area. On completion a hole appeared with water and some metal ore pebbles falling to the bottom. I cast light on a stone and tossed it into the pit. There was about a meter of water in the pit. The ground must have been saturated and my spell didn’t remove water. Then the edge collapsed with me falling into the pit. Mud and earth covered me in the slosh water at the bottom. Muddy water filled my mouth and a struggled to move. This was how I was going to die? After panicking for a few seconds I cast Aether respiration with the instant ability. I was able to think clearer now that I was able to breathe. The mud and earth covering me was heavy and it was a bit hard to inflate my lungs. Ok, I cast flight but the spell was unable to pull me from the muck. Just how much earth was on top of me? Ok…options…try sending earth to the dimensional pocket so I could move…cast clean clothes a few hundred times to eliminate the mud…recast the superior excavate spell. My Aether regen was about 2.7 per minute…Aether respiration drained about 5 per minute…and I had 570 remaining Aether. I had enough Aether to try the excavate spell but if it failed I would about 30 minutes of time before I died. I focused on the earth with the spell and cast excavate again trying to hit the same area around me.

Splash. On completion of the spell I found myself in the pit neck deep in water. Blessed sun light streamed down. I was able to see my error. Even though the top ground was dry the stream because I had diverted the stream the stream had soaked the ground. I could see more mud moving into the pool. I still had my flight spell activated and left the hole. Well that could have gone better. I cleaned myself off with spells and retired to my tent.

Resting I found my excavate spell had increased 32% with just two casts. Whether that was from the near death experience or had to do with the high Aether cost I didn’t know. After cultivating to bring my Aether full again I went out and widened the hole to twice the size. I stayed a safe distance away. The large pit was half filled with water and I had yet to find the spaceship. I checked my spell – 64% toward level 2. Ok so the amount of Aether did effect how fast a spell leveled. That meant higher level spells leveled at roughly the same speed as lower spells based on total Aether utilized.

Ok I was no engineer but if I was going to dig for this ship I needed to vastly improve the stream diversion. I went upstream past the mark spot about 20 meters north of my dam divert. I excavated the stream bed twice making a wide muddy pool 3 meters deep. I then lined to pool with thin stone in a half pipe shape. I worked to do this 2-3 more time heading upstream, then worked toward my original dam divert. My hope was I would be able to prevent as much ground saturation as possible.

Over the next 24 hours I did my best. I created a 50 meter long channel that was 3 meters deep and 3 meters wide. It was completely lined in 4 cm stone. My reward was the pit by the ship did reduce in depth by half. But more importantly the walls of the pit was more stable with less water. My excavate spell had leveled to 4 and was almost to level 5. At level 2 I reduced the Aether cost by 7%, bringing the cost to 465 per cast. At level 3 I increased the volume by 11%. I was now at about 32 cubic meters per cast. My summon stone hit level 14 and my level 13 boon was to increase the base creation from 2 cubic feet to 3 cubic feet.

I briefly wondered if the farmers would be worried about me but I did say I was going out for a week. Maybe they would send someone looking for me after the week expired. I refocused on the ship…which I had yet to find…but at least I felt it would be safer now. I expanded the hole above the ship to 18 meters by 18 meters and 3 meters deep over the next two days. I was only able to do this because at level 5 I was able to reduce the spells cost by 40 aether with a boon, bringing it to 425, and at level 7 I was able to select a 20% increase to volume. My Aether pool was now around 1200. So I could cast the spell 14 times a day.

One side benefit was under the water in this massive hole was a thin layer of metal ores. There was definitely some gold flakes in there. This spell was a golden mining ability but then I thought about it. In a universe were ships probably took tons of rare metals it was more efficient to mine asteroids. Oh well.

The water in my mud pit came up to just my knee. Not bad. I cast flight and then cast the excavate spell in the center of the pit and…yes…the ship was about 2 meters down. It was going to take a while to completely get to this ship and my pessimistic side thought that maybe the remains of the orc warleader offspring were not in the ship. Well I wasn’t going to worry about that for now. I didn’t dig deeper for now. I just widened the hole for now. I didn’t want to uncover the ship just yet due to any possible air surveillance. How was I going to cover such a massive ship?

Back in my tent I came up with two possible ideas. I could make a giant pool and keep the ship under water…excavate around the ship and manage the stream to fill it. Or I could try to build some stone scaffolding over the ship and cover it with slate rocks. I was no engineer and I was worried if I could make scaffolding strong enough. And I was a bit worried about the amount of stone required as well and it I had to remove the stone later to get the ship out. The ship was over 12 meters wide and almost 30 meters long. First I would excavate around the ship then decide.

It took two more days of obsessive work. My excavate was level 8 and I had decreased the Aether cost by another 36 at level 5 and increased the area by 32% at level 7. Personal Dimensional Pocket had reached level 7 as well and the boon was allowed me to decrease the cost of from 90 to 76 per cubic meter. I had gotten most of the ships bow uncovered and the port side. I was going with the first option for now and keeping it under muddy water. That was when I got to the stern and found the cargo ramp open. The ship had filled with mud and water over the last century. I don’t know why I had thought the ship would have been airtight with everything preserved. Guess I wouldn’t be able to get it flight worthy and sell it or use it. It was like my world crashed around me. Well there was always salvage…and completing the mission.

I rested in tent and looked at my skills and spells.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Next Skill Slot at Level 5 |  | Unused Skill Points: 6 | | |
|  | ***Skill*** | ***Level*** | ***Tier*** | **Percent Next Lvl** | **Stat** |
|  | *Spellcraft (Primary)* | *17* | *8* | 29% | *Chan* |
|  | *Spirit Magic* | *2* | *2* | 92% | *Aeth* |
|  | *Mind Shield* | *3* | *3* | 69% | *Int* |
|  | *Sense Psionics* | *2* | *2* | 89% | *Chan* |
|  | *Earth Magic* | *10* | *5* | 14% | *Aeth* |
|  | *Stone Magic* | *16* | *6* | 82% | *Con* |
|  | *Order Magic* | *3* | *3* | 12% | *Aeth* |
| 1 | *Marksman* | *11* | *6* | 32% | *Agil* |
| 2 | *Cooking* | *4* | *4* | 41% | *Agil* |
| 3 | *Aether Cultivation* | *13* | *7* | 14% | *Chan* |
| 4 | *Air Magic* | *7* | *5* | 62% | *Aeth* |
| 5 | *Alchemy* | *8* | *4* | 11% | *Int* |
| 6 | *Botany* | *7* | *5* | 71% | *Int* |
| 7 | *Mycology* | *7* | *5* | 60% | *Int* |
| 8 | *Water Magic* | *4* | *4* | 29% | *Aeth* |
| 9 | *Sculptor* | *5* | *4* | 72% | *Chr* |
| 10 | *Supplimenal Aether Core* | *11* | *6* | 11% | *Aeth/Chan* |
| 11 | *Teleport Magic* | *7* | *5* | 21% | *Int* |
| 12 | *Time Magic* | *7* | *5* | 21% | *Chan* |
| 13 | *Space Magic* | *7* | *5* | 21% | *Aeth* |
| 14 | *Force Magic* | *7* | *5* | 61% | *Str* |

I had boon selections for teleport, time and space magic waiting. Spellcraft was getting close to level 23. I was considering using my points to push the skill up to get a level 23 boon but held off for now.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Next Spell Slot at Intellect 50 | | | Unused Spell Points: 6 | |
|  | ***Spell*** | ***Level*** | ***Rank*** | **Percent Next Level** | **Tier** |
|  | *Heal Other* | *4* | *3* | 7% | *1* |
|  | *Summon Stone (Primary)* | *14* | *7* | 40% | *1* |
|  | *Stone Bullet (Secondary)* | *13* | *7* | 57% | *1* |
|  | *Flight* | *Special* | *Special* | NA | *5* |
|  | *Superior Excavate (Secondary)* | *8* | *5* | 26% | *5* |
| 1 | *Create Water* | *6* | *4* | 98% | *1* |
| 2 | *Aether Respiration* | *6* | *4* | 28% | *3* |
| 3 | *Personal Dimensional Pocket* | *8* | *4* | 30% | *1* |
| 4 | *Personal Force Shield* | *7* | *5* | 2% | *1* |
| 5 |  |  |  |  |  |
| 6 |  |  |  |  |  |
| 7 |  |  |  |  |  |
| 8 |  |  |  |  |  |
| 9 |  |  |  |  |  |
| Psionic | *Fortress Mind* | *2* | *2* | 55% | *2* |

I had a lot of open spell slots. I was looking forward to getting back to Leo and filling out some spells. I decided I would start focusing on leveling Aether respiration to level 11. That was so I could get improvements and level 7 and 11 and make the spell more efficient. Everything else looked ok. I brought up the specs for the ship on the SYSTEM pad.

|  |
| --- |
| Name: Ven’yer  Ship Model: Leech Assault Ship  Origin: Orc Empire of Haas’tru  Ship Size Classification: Gun Ship  Length: 33.4 meters  Ship Width: 16.4 meters  Ship Mass: 2,664 metric tons  Shield Class: Corvette-6  Hull Class: Corvette-2  Maneuverability: Terrible  Max Cargo: 36 metric tons  FTL: Yes. Lessor Aether Jump Drive  Weapon Loadout: Hull Cutter, Light Repeating Laser Cannon (3), Anti-Fighter Missiles (20)  Defense Loadout: Anti-Missile Chaff (200), Anti-Missile Rail Guns (2)  Required Crew (5): Pilot, Navigator, Engineer, Gunner, Space Mage  Passengers: 15 Marines with Battle Suits  System Cost: 4.6 million credits    Description: Designed by an Orc Empire as a troop transport to deliver 15 marines to complete boarding actions. The stern has a powerful hull cutter around the bay doors. The leech has heavy armor and shields allowing it to close on capital ships before flipping over and attaching its stern. The ship has a small cargo bay, 7.2 meters by 14.8 meters with a height of 3.6 meters. Off the cargo bay are five bunk rooms with three beds each, and one armory. Forward of the cargo bay is a small common crew area. Off the main bridge quarter are six cabins for crew. The small cockpit in the bow had a seating arrangement for four. There is a lower deck and upper deck for engineering and weapon hard points.  First used in the battle of Gherlo Star. Over three hundred leeches penetrated defenses to capture four Elven Sa’kura Class Battleships turning the battle and eventually leading to the dissolution of the Third Elven Empire. The design was copied by many races and was used not only in ship boarding actions but also to deliver troops to planetary battlefields. Since it was only able to drop 15 soldiers compared to larger troop ships the leech typically carries spec-op forces.    The weakness of the leech was discovered because of poor maneuverability using advanced larger ship missiles against it. Now in battles where the leech appears heavy fighters are launched with high yield missiles are used effectively against it. A new class of leech ship was recently introduced, reducing the hull and shields in order to add a cloaking device. Older retired/salvaged leech ships are also used as mini-traders and passenger ferries. |

I found out orcs operated in teams of three on boarding actions from some data on the pad. One sergeant and two lancers. Each leech vessel had five teams. The typical scenario was one team holds the breach portal to the ship then the four remaining teams hit their target which was either bridge, engineering, or munitions. Typically thirty to forty leeches would attack a single battleship. The five crew members would be responsible for the ship. Typically the captain was called the warleader. So that must have been the orc I already buried. The crew were generally in training to be posted to larger vessels if they succeeded in enough missions. This crew had four mission successes before crashing according to the ship logs. They had taken a mining base, a commercial space station, and two merchant cargo ships. Not very challenging targets from their descriptions. This ship sounded more like a pirate ship than anything else. I was now excited again. There had to be a bunch of great gear left on this ship that I could sell.

The next morning I cast my excavate spell in the open hold clearing it out of debris. The stern of the ship was oval. Thrusters were mounted around the perimeter, inside of that was the cutting laser for hull breaching and in the center was a 5 meter by 3 meter bay door. Which was open. It took three casts before the water was clear enough to enter with Aether respiration active. I cast light on a bunch of stones and dropped them throughout the bay. Using the SYSTEM pad I mapped the bay. There were three doors to the port side, three doors to the starboard and one door toward the bow. All closed. Hmmm. Should I get my hopes up again? There were also three human shaped alcoves by each of five of the doors for a total of 15. The pad told me they were charging stations for the warriors power armor. All of them were of course empty. The soldiers must not have been aboard when the ship crashed.

I started opening the warrior crew quarters one at a time using the mechanical override the pad graciously walked me through. Every compartment was filled with water. Each had a double bunk on the left and a single bed on the right. A few personal items in the quarters had rotted. I checked the compartments under the bunks and found some non-system pads that were damaged beyond use, some jewelry, a bunch of rotted clothing items. I left everything alone for now. I then opened the armory compartment and finally got some good news! There was a rack of four heavy rifles like the one I had already gotten with another 12 empty slots. The armory had a whole workshop with spare armor pieces and electronics which I would hold onto. There were neat rows of baseball sized objects on a wall. Thirty seven dark blue, forty eight dark red and twelve white occupied 160 slots. The pad let me they were grenades but couldn’t tell me if they were viable. There was also a charging rack for power clips for the rifles containing 60 clips. The piece de la resistance was two massive cannons. They were 1.5 meters long and had tripods to set up. Another rack that was suppose to hold sixteen pistols according to the pad was empty but I was happy with this haul. I left everything for now.

I moved to the forward compartment. A few light stones illuminated a common area. There was a larger door on the port side. The schematic indicated it led to the outside. A pair of ladders in the corners allowed crew to ascend to the lower deck or go up to the upper deck. The lower deck contained the munitions, water tanks, fuel and the Aether power core. The upper deck had the magitech, life support, engineering and the ship’s computers. I went below first. It was much more cramped as I swam with a light stone. I had the movie moment as a spacesuit orc floated below. I was scarred for a bit before I moved in. The Orc was sealed in the suit with a helmet on. The orc looked gross. Translating the suits ID with the pad I had found one of the warleader’s children, Chr’as. Two more to go. I went to the Aether power core. It was embedded in a complex series of runes and thick circuits. It was the size of a softball and was dark. That meant it was 100% drained. I tried to remove the core but I was not able to. I left it for now. I went to the upper deck and found another orc in a suit. It was not one of the warleader’s children though. I went back to the common area. The starboard wall had a room that was dedicated to food preparation and storage, aka the galley. The were a bunch of storage compartments in the common area for entertainment equipment. Tables, chairs, sparring weapons, and other things I assumed where for orc entertainment. I moved to the only other door going to the bridge. It took a little longer to get to the mechanical override as I had to bypass some basic mechanical security locks.

A two meter wide corridor led to another door. There were four doors on each side of the corridor evenly spaced. The pad said seven were crew quarters. I opened the first one and was shocked as I was sucked in as there was no water in the compartment. I swore. I quickly went through and put every item I could find into my pocket space. The room was small. The bed was 1 meter by 3 meters and took up half the room. There were plenty of storage compartments and a desk and chair fixed to the floor. I left and decided to bypass the other crew quarters for now unless I couldn’t find the bodies of the two other orcs I was looking for. The captains room was slightly larger than the other six according to the diagram. It was 4 meters by 3 meters. The 8th door was across the hall from the captains and mirrored its size. It was the navigation room and captains ready room. I moved to the bridge’s door.

The bridge was cozy. Five seats, three of which were occupied with orc corpses. I checked and found the other two children. One didn’t have a helmet of and was just a skull. I did a mental fist pump. I spent a few hours getting the orc bodies out of the ship and creating five separate orc burial pyres. One of the orcs was the grandson of the orc warleader according to the datapad. The other was the wife of one of the son. Apparently this clan had family units serve as crew on their smaller vessels. The 15 orc marines were also related in some way but I guessed they had deployed in the final battle.

I salvaged all the suits and I will say it was pretty disgusting and I needed to put on a helmet in order to not vomit because of the smell. I didn’t have any more fuel so I had to make wood pyres and that just added time. I made stone coffins not for propriety but to better focus the heat. I was a little torn on whether to burn the corpses with their jewelry or not. I decided they didn’t need it in their afterlife and put it in my storage. I started each burn separately and performed the rite. After three hours I was able to get the ash and rub it on my forehead. The SYSTEM gave me a bunch of notifications.

*Title Bestowed: Cleric of Gerrn I (correctly perform 5 rites of the Gerrn clan, next level 100 correctly performed rites)*

*Title Equipped Bonus: +25% reaction bonus with Gerrn clan, +5% reaction bonus with other orc clans*

*Achievement Reward: +2 to Charisma, +2 Channeling*

*You have earned two titles. +1 Fame*

*System Quest Completed: Father’s Last Wish*

*Warleader Dul’Morth Gerrn crashed on this planet 102 years ago. He was the only survivor of his ship. Heavily injured he found his way here to a small homestead where he killed the residents. While he was dying he wished on the SYSTEM to fulfill his last wish. Give his crew mates the Gerrn burial rite. In his crew where his son and two of his daughters.*

*Rewards: +4 Primary Stat Points, Choose Two free skills from the following list: Starship Engineering, Long Blades, Gambling or Starship Gunner, 10,000 experience*

*You have reached level 5*

*You have reached level 6*

*System Blessing: Mother’s Favor*

*You have performed the last rite for the child and mother who perished in battle of the Orc Gerrn clan. +50% Aether recovery for 7 days, +100 experience*

Fantastic! I added the free stats and 4 points from leveling to Aether. My thought was I had a whole bunch of open spell slots but Aether was a limiting factor. Next I had to select the two free skills. Starship engineering was an easy add to help my spaceship mage path. For the second I was torn between long blades and starship gunner. Long blades was more viable and I could raise it. Starship gunner was cool but I doubted I could raise it anytime soon. Gambling might be useful as well and easy to raise. I had the brooch which gave me +2 to long blades as well. After the short internal monologue I choose long blades.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Starship Engineering** | 1 |
| Associated Stat: | Int |
| Leveling Effect: | Add Knowledge |
| Level 7 Boon: | Not reached |
| Allows access to the following skills: Magitech Integration, Starship Life Support, Starship Power Systems, Starship Propulsion, Starship Shields, Starship Synthetic Gravity, Starship FTL | |
|  |  |
| **Long Blades** | 1 |
| Associated Stat: | Str |
| Leveling Effect: | Improved swordmanship |
| Level 7 Boon: | Not reached |
| Allows access to long blade Combat Actions. Can know learn specific long blade skills. | |

I had to use one of my 3 Aether crystals to recharge the SYSTEM pad to get all the answers I wanted. One of the cylinders opened to accept the rice grain sized crystal. First I went through the engineering skills. I learned there were three branches of starship maintenance; magitech, mechanics and engineering. Each of these three had 5-7 sub skills. Magitech required the enchantment skill before I could learn it as well. The starship mechanic focused on repairing hulls, maintenance of life support, water systems and all the little stuff. You would need to have 19 sub skills to cover everything. The general starship engineering did give me a base knowledge of everything. Although I didn’t understand any magitech I could find where the tech and magitech would interact. The amount of knowledge I had just absorbed was incredible.

I pulled the orc sword from my inventory and swung it competently. I found out ‘combat actions’ were like spells for warriors. They had melee combat and ranged combat skill which were like the spellcraft skill for mages. At level 7 they could start to modify their combat actions to make them more effective at prime levels of advancement. As a mage class I could not learn melee combat or ranged combat with the exception being if it was a reward from a SYSTEM mission. I could learn one combat action for every 30 intellect. Warriors could learn one combat action for every 3 intellect. I found warriors could learn one spell for every 30 intellect. This was the SYSTEMS way of creating equality. Warriors would probably only learn one or two spells…I mean how high would a warrior push intellect over physical stats? And if they couldn’t tailor spells what was the point of investing in that tract.

I opened my skills and decided to select my boons for teleport, time and space magic.

*Teleport Magic Boon Selection:*

* *“Blink” – can move up to 4 meters away instantly, 40 Aether, cooldown 60 seconds*
* *“Spell Efficacy” - +10% improved spell effects for teleport spells*
* *“Counter Spell” – can cancel a teleport magic spell within 100 meters up to tier 10, cost 200 Aether, cooldown 24 hours*

Ok thinking that blink could really only be used once in combat because of the length of combat it wasn’t too usefull – maybe it could teleport me through walls though…that would be useful. Improved spell effects was good…how about my dimensional pocket spell? I went to the pad and found out since the spell had 3 magic spheres it would only use 1/3 the bonus. The last option was counter spell. Once again not too useful as how many teleport mages would I encounter? I went to the pad again…it could affect spells that had multiple spheres. So I could cancel a mages personal dimensional pocket spell. Now that would be extremely useful cutting an enemy mage from all his important stuff. I selected Counter Spell.

*Space Magic Boon Selection:*

* *“Pocket Space” – create a permanent pocket space for the mage 1 meter cube*
* *“Hastened Casting” - 20% faster casting for space spells*

Ok the pad let me know the first option had no upkeep and items in the space would remain there even on my death. Items would age in the space though. It would be a useful second space I could use for very important items. I selected that option. I would still need to maintain my other space in order to passively level up space, time and teleport skills.

*Time Magic Boon Selection:*

* *“Haste” – instant cast, move yourself 250% faster for 40 seconds, 150 Aether cost, cooldown 1 hour*
* *“Improved Spell Efficiency” – Time magic spells take 15% less Aether*
* *“Free Spell” – learn one tier 5 or lower time magic spell without using a spell slot*

I went to the pad again. Haste was a tier 5 spell and cost 300 Aether to cast and had a casting time of 5 seconds and had a duration of 20 seconds. The cost to view all time magic spells would have required another whole Aether crystal so I had mentally passed on option 3. What I learned from the system is when a spell was typically offered you got a spell that was equivalent of having the spell leveled up to level 7 with premium spell tailoring selections. It might even be as potent as a spell that was level 23 if a mage didn’t have great options when leveling. I selected haste. I know I was probably doing the wrong thing as the free spell might have great options but haste was just another possible life saving skill.

I was full of adrenaline and endorphins from the last hour of selecting improvements. I cleared some more earth around the ship before retiring to the tent. I searched on the pad through the files of the warleader looking for engineering tutorials. I found a whole slew and something else. Sword Combat Actions. There were five. Gerrn Sword Form, Heavenly Last Attack, Sword Wall Defense, Marmyn Sword Form and Marmyn Silent Strike. It took a few minutes to find the Marmyn was another orc clan. Apparently the warleader had one parent from each clan and these were his legbacies. I had to go to the SYSTEM to get info on the sword forms. Gerrn Sword Form was a combat style for mass combat, it gave +15% attack damage, +5% defense, +5% sword attack speed. Marmyn Sword Form was designed for stealth, +25% attack and damage on surprise attack, +10% movement in stealth. Heavenly Attack paid your health to increase damage. Sword defense wall was a stationary skill the greatly increased defense and Marmyn Silent Strike was basically a complete stealth attack that cost stamina to do a damage multipler.

There would also combat actions for ranged combat so I decided for now I would only choose to learn one sword form. I learned purchasing a sword form from the SYSTEM cost anywhere from 5,000 to 1,000,000 credits and once learned the tutorial would delete from the SYSTEM device. Both the Gerrn and Marmyn were also restricted, requiring special permissions to purchase as well. The Gerrn sword form had a cost of 75,000 and the Marmyn 90,000 if I could purchase them. I was guessing I was extremely lucky this SYSTEM pad didn’t have a password or biometric lock on it. I found out how to enable one and did so with my biometric data. I also found I could lay the pad on a surface it would project a 3d hologram about 40 cm high. That way I could watch and mimic the forms to learn. As an aside I found a film library on the device as well. There was a lot of orc porn which made me feel our species were not too different. Throughout the night I ended up playing snipits of orc ‘movies’ and ‘histories’ and yes I did watch a few of the porn videos strictly for interracial curiosity.

I slept a few hours and woke up deciding I would learn the Gerrn sword form. The Marmyn seemed limited in application in relation to my style. I spent five hours before I was prompted to acquire the combat action. I guessed I was a slow learner since four hours or less was the norm. I accepted.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Gerrn Sword Form** | 1 |
| Weapon Type | Long Blades |
| Stamina Cost | 10 stamina per 6 seconds |
| Attack Speed | +5% |
| Additional Damage | +15% |
| Additional Hit Chance | +0% |
| Additional Defense | +5% |
| Parry Defense | +0% |
| Defense Speed | +0% |
| Combat Awareness | +0% |
| The Gerrn sword form is the specialized sword art of the Gerrn clan. It relies on an aggressive attack and minimal defense for large melees. | |

It was like tai chi with a sword practicing. There were 4 base attack movements and 2 base defense movements which were all blended in actual combat. With this success I was more comfortable wearing the sword. After I while I was able to adjust the sheath and get accustomed to the having the sword on my belt…but since it seemed like a better idea for surprise I put it in my new storage space. It had to mentally fit diagonally in the cube as it was over a meter long.

It was about time to head back.