Chapter 2

My tower was getting tall, just over 20’ tall and approaching semi-habitability. To make building easier I added a stone spiral staircase on the inside wall to avoid scaffolding. I added a 2’ lip to the circumference of the tower to hold joists for flooring. I cut trees and used the strength of the golems to make beams and boards. They were stored in a large stone drying oven that was solar heated. I used stone braces in the kiln to hopefully prevent too much warping. The kiln had enough wood to finish one floor and half of the next. I started to mark out a road that went straight east to give the golems something to do. They could work on it if they completed their other tasks. My eventual goal would be to have a road all the way to both coasts. My ultimate goal was to establish a college around the tower and accelerate humanities acquisition of knowledge. My other venue to prepare for the invasion in 2088 was to propagate magic. That would mean spreading my genes…I hoped the college would present opportunities to this end. Although did women even attend colleges back in the 1600s?

The days started to blend and joists went in…and then out. A massive storm came through and the square 12” joists noticeably warped. I would have to finish the tower before adding in the flooring.

It was a brutally hot day in early July and I was 30’ up on the wall of the tower when I heard a musket shot to the east, then four more shots. I gathered Flint and Ruby and transformed to my panther form. I moved fast in the direction of the constant sound of fire. About a mile from my tower the shots became louder so I slowed and climbed a tree. The battle was a mile further away…two English colonial units were attacking another unit that was retreating south west. I guessed maybe 40 English and 14 Spanish? No not Spanish because they were blonde. I had Flint and Ruby hold off from advancing. I moved closer and listened to the conversation. The English were yelling for the Spaniards to surrender. So they were Spanish. They were all male and mismatched…probably just Spanish colonists exploring. Eventually the English charged and the Spaniards tried to run but they were all caught and killed. There were 35 Englishmen left and one or two injured. I heard the Englishmen say something about Indians and got worried. I raced north and yes they had slaughtered my trading village.

I returned to where the English were resting and climbed a tree again. I mentally ordered Ruby and Flint to attack at sunset, just when it was dark. They English moved east with their injured before making camp. The night was brutal and I spared one in my vengeance. I questioned him and learned there was a similar squad out here on a one month patrol from the coast and a fort was going up in the Virginia interior far to the north. The other patrol was far to the north. When I asked about the why they killed the Indians they said they came upon them being friendly to the Spanish. The last soldier was killed and I returned to my tower.

I made a third golem, Ebony. My work became focused and as the first snow fell I finished the tower and managed to enclose the top with a stone dome. A staircase led to a small lookout on the dome peak with an access from the top floor. The first ceiling/ floor went in and I was impressed it was actually a flat floor. We restocked the kiln. For the winter the golems were set to working on the road east. I needed a lot more golems. I could now create a 4th but that would use almost all my magic to sustain them all. Then as I worked I felt the stone golem spell reach level 5. I could now choose a path development. I had narrowed the choice between increasing the volume of the golems from 1 cubic yard to 2 cubic yards or I could reduce the maintenance cost by almost half, allowing me to double my golems. I choose the second option.

The change was more massive than I thought. If I wanted I could now control 10 golems now but would have almost no magic reserves. I animated three more golems over the next few days with my sculpting skills getting better, Slate, Opal and Shale joined my work crew. Opal had a feminine build like Ruby. What I needed was someone who knew how to build lasting buildings. I was happy with my tower but I knew it was primitive looking at best. Even though it was essentially a solid piece of rock and looked great I wanted future buildings to be more conformist. I packed up some gear in a special rucksack that I could hang around my neck in panther form. It had the coins I found on the dead soldiers, some food, 24 knives and some seeds. I gave the golems commands to start harvesting emeralds, rubies and sapphires during the day and storing them in the basement. At night they were to work on the road east clearing and harvesting trees for the kiln, leveling the road and dropping crushed stone. A made them stone sledges, saws and large axes.

I headed northeast looking for English settlers. I found a homestead two days later, maybe 50 miles from my tower. I approached them in human form. The Taylor families totaling 12 people were clearing land in the winter and living in a very small wood cabin. They all looked very unhealthy, thin and miserable. We talked for a bit and I learned they had arrived 5 months ago with a charter to claim farming land. There were two brothers, their wives and their combined children. The children were aged from infant to fourteen. The family was unprepared for the winter. I gave them the 14 apples, 6 oranges and a bag of beans I had with me. I told the family I was headed to the coast to look for a stone mason. I skirted other homesteads in the following days as I was looking for a town. I finally found a town and was surprised there were a number of slaves in town. I walked through and was approached by two soldiers. They questioned me and thought I was French with my accent. I told them I just wanted to trade some high quality knives. The soldiers escorted me to the exchange, the governors controlled market. I unwrapped my 24 knives. They were as good as any steel weapons with two casts of harden stone and the trader kept asking me questions about the material. I said it was a metal alloy even though it was just magically hardened stone. The bartering took two hours and I got seeds for cotton, mint, rosemary, thyme, cucumbers, basil, and pumpkin. I also got two sets of common clothes for hot weather, 10’ of fine twine and 30’ of heavy rope. The fine twine would make cutting softened stone easier. I asked if there was a mason in town looking for work. I didn’t get a response just a lot of questions of why I needed a mason.

I walked through town accompanied by the soldiers. They said they were currently at war with the Dutch to the north and the Spanish to the south. How far north? Two weeks travel in good weather on foot was there answer. The soldiers said New Amsterdam would soon be conquered as the English were massing for an attack in the spring. They brought me to the house of the only stone mason in town. I was able to talk with the mason but he was not for hire. I talked to him in his home about proper foundations and he knew a lot about properly paving roads, sand, crushed stone, then mortar set pavers.

I needed to decide whether to continue my search for a mason or return. I decided to head to New Amsterdam. I traveled in panther form at night and walked on the rough road during the day. It took 6 days to get the city and there was some snow along the path. I bypassed a half dozen English towns and one fort. I had made another 24 knives and grew an orange tree and had 30 oranges with me. I was not met too favorably from the Dutch when it was found out I only spoke English. It took me a day to earn enough trust to trade. I made sure to tell them the English were planning an attack. I got a set of warm clothes, seven more varieties of herb seeds, a small pot of olives from Spain that had pits, four types of pepper seeds, two types of cabbage seeds and two whole lemons! I also got two small potted tea trees that were on their last legs that I revived enough to make it home. The stone mason I was looking for was also available for hire. He was 38 years old and had been building buildings in New Amsterdam for 7 years and learned his trade across the sea from the age of 14 but he had been repeatedly short changed for his work and the rumors of the English coming made him want out. He also had a 15 year old daughter. His two sons and wife died in New Amsterdam. Tom’s pay was to be housing and food for his daughter and 1 ounce of silver monthly. They would be ready to leave in two days.

I went into the woods and made 24 more knives and grew enough food for the trip back. The knives sold well and I had enough to pay the mason for two years. We left in a light snow fall. The mason and his daughter were bundled in a small cart pulled by a single old mule. This wasn’t going to get us back quick enough. As we made camp the first night I made a mule golem. I got the size by keeping the chest hollow. The next morning I released the mule of the mason and substituted my mule. The mason and his daughter were in shock but didn’t object, maybe out of fear. The ride wasn’t too rough as the snow was compact giving a level road. We all huddled in the small wagon as the golem set a fast pace. We made almost 120 miles in a single day! We all slept in the wagon at night and the mule slowed to a slow pace so it wasn’t bumpy, giving us 15 miles overnight. During the following day we were stopped by five mounted soldiers the next day. The English soldiers were assholes and searched the wagon. They seemed so intent on the girl bundled in furs and clothes they didn’t even notice our mule was stone. When the soldiers tried to drag the girl to the woods I stepped in. I released the stone mule from the harness and tackled one of the soldiers, stabbing him under the chin into his brain with a knife. The mule reared crushing another soldiers head. The girl was thrown to the snow by the three men dragging her to the woods. They all drew swords and started to circle me. The golem took out another soldier and I just backed up and fired off my stone bullet spell repeatedly not doing much damage to their torso. The remaining two soldiers tried to get to their horses to flee but the mule got them first. It was bloody and crazy fight. I picked their purses up emptying some coins into my pouch. Tom thanked me and said he wanted to turn around and return to New Amsterdam. The English were bastards and he didn’t want to go further. I said he was coming and he dropped the objection. The weather improved the next day but the terrain became rocky as the road deteriorated. I decided to summon the golems now to us as I had a feeling I would need all 6 of them to carry the wagons contents. It was prophetic as that evening the axel started to clink every rotation. We kept moving and after another 20 miles or so the axel went. I ended the mule’s golems magic connection, regaining the magic to my pool and turning the mule to a statue. Tom and Amelia looked distressed but I assured them everything would be fine.

I guessed based on my connection to the golems we had 3 days to wait for them. I grew two apple trees, two orange trees, some cucumbers, squash and corn. We made a camp and I hunted small game adding it to the pot. Two natives visited us once and I traded 10 knives for heavy leather, a sack of potatoes and some deer meat. Just as Tom seemed ready to ditch me the golems showed up. They scared Amelia and Tom as the six golems picked up the wagon with all of us in it. Their coordination was such that it felt like a level ride. It was going to be maybe 5\ days to get back to the tower.

We ran into two problems, water crossings and avoiding settlements. The settlements were such that as we saw signs we diverted but that caused some issues with overgrowth. The water and swamp crossings were solved by removed the wheels of the large cart wagon and then I used my soften stone spell to put a thin layer of stone around the wagon, making a boat. We had a golem pull a rope guide across the water crossings. It took 6 days instead of six to get to the tower. I was shocked that my tower was occupied when we got there!

There was an old indian women and four children. I recognized the woman, the medicine women from the village that I had traded with before the English had massacred them. After talking with her I found her and the children had been harvesting herbs and roots in the woods. I let them stay with the stipulation that Olivia teaches the Indian children English. The English were coming and the few dozen soldiers I had killed were not going to stop it.

Over the next few days everyone got acclimated to the golems. I grew an olive orchard…a weird thing to do in the winter but I planned to use it as my cash crop. I needed to create fields around the land where the gems were. The golems had pulled hundreds from the ground and I would need to figure out how to cut them. Tom used the golems to help build himself a nice two story stone house. The road east was about 2 miles long so far with crushed stone but I decided to stop that project for now.

I needed to step back and set my priorities. For the next 50 years:

* Establish an economic base to fund all other goals.
* Establish a university to accelerate the knowledge and technological advancements.
* Prevent the persecution of native Americans.
* Curtail slavery in America.
* Spread magic.