Chapter 30 Fast Travel

I woke in the morning with a naked Jaesmin sleeping atop me. A new smell struck me…the smell of lingering sex. The game developers must be working overtime with updates but they could apply their efforts elsewhere. I was trying to move and not disturb Jaesmin when I saw a familiar feline sitting at the base of the bed.

“Simba where have you been?” I asked with indifference in my voice. If he wanted to show up when he pleased then I wouldn’t pine after him.

“Tallis you really should read the game updates more often,” he replied with some snide in his tone. I checked and there were 413 game update notes. Yeah not something I wanted to spend my time on. Simba continued, “Companions are now a paid option for players.” He preened a little bit. “We offer guidance in character creation and major changes to the game but if you want us to travel with you then you need to pay,” he spun and wrapped his tail before sitting.

“How much is your company worth?” I asked with some snark of my own.

“Just one hundred US dollars a month, the same as a monthly subscription.” I would have choked if I wasn’t a virtual being. Two hundred dollars a month to play this game with a companion? Well I technically didn’t have any money so I guess Simba was here for another reason.

“So why are you here then?” I asked, now curious.

“READ THE UPDATES TALLIS! You are stuck in here and I know you have the free time.” He sighed as best a miniature tiger could. “The programmers have launched the class system. So I am here to make sure you understand and select a class. Since you have not read it I will detail it for you. At level one you can choose from three classes. Each has a bonus and penalty to pool regenerations.

Warrior, +100% to stamina regeneration, +25% to health regeneration, -25% magic pool regeneration

Mage, +100% to magic pool regeneration, -25% to stamina and health regeneration

Adept, +25% to all regenerations, +25% faster skill growth

You are probably thinking that the mage is hindered and weaker? Well don’t worry their power comes from spells. A mage can learn one spell for every 7 intellect points. Adepts can learn one spell for every 11 intellect and finally warriors can learn one spell for every 23 intellect.” Simba paused waiting.

“So I have to choose a class? And that is the only benefits I receive? It is an easy choice for me. Adept. Skill growth is what drives my ability to expand my village.” I said trying to said sagely.

Simba returned, “Yes the adept is the crafter class and all-rounder for combat. There is one other benefit you gain as well. You get a foci skill. Well you get two as an adept.” He took a deep breath, “Since you didn’t read the update a foci skill is a core skill you build your class around. It does not count toward your limit of 23 and advances 200% faster than your other skills. Warriors get one skill, mages one skill and adepts get two at level 1.”

“What that is amazing! No more penalty! Definitely adept then!” I yelled and woke Jaesmin. I pulled myself away from her and went down stairs while dressing. I could have auto equipped my clothes but dressing made me feel normal. Simba followed.

“Is that all the benefits of selecting a class?” I asked while preparing breakfast.

“Yes at level one that all the benefits. When you reach level 25 you can select your profession. And then at level 100 you can select your specialization.” I was about to ask another question but the cat raised a paw, “Let me explain. A profession will be your true class. Fighter, Wizard, Druid, Ranger, Monk, Paladin, Bureaucrat, Sage and many more. Each of these profession comes with three additional skills that do not count toward your cap of 23. These bonus skills also have the same 200% boost to learning speed.” He stopped and raised a paw to his mouth the lick it.

“Is there an architect profession?” I asked with eagerness in my voice.

“No,” my heart dropped. “But there can be. Professions are fluid and just need to be approved by the admins if they are not listed. You could chose to be a dancer for instance.” This was great news and I needed to hit level 25 as quickly as possible. Simba continued, “The final selection occurs at level 100. That is when you select your specialization. It must be a branch of your profession though. Going back to the dancer example…specializations currently approved are sword dancer, ballerina, ritual summoner, entertainer, seductress and acrobat.”

“How does ritual summoner relate to dancing?” I asked curious.

“Rituals take a long time to prepare and execute. Dancers must perform a ritual dance to channel the magic into the ritual pattern. It is actually quite powerful. But since that choice is at level 100 and you are a long long long way away no need to go into details. As you know game leveling will be slowed on launch. They are hoping the average player will take a month to reach level 25 and a year to reach level 100.” Simba turned and started walking away.

“Simba can you refresh my memory on what happens at game launch? I wont be able to level for 30 days right?” I asked starting to process everything.

“Yes, no leveling or skill advancement for hard wired players for 30 days. You will only be able to level after one of the new players has passed your current level. So if you were level 150 you might have to wait longer than 30 days before a player reached that level. Once again Tallis, READ THE UPDATES!” I waived him off. I would get to it.

“Thanks Simba. Are you leaving? Am I now an Adept?” I asked and my character profile pinged.

Simba voice carried from a distance as I opened my sheets, “Check on the new penalties for having over 23 skills.”

*Adept Class Selected, +25% to all pool regeneration, Please select your 2 foci skills*

Simba was gone when I looked up. I was going to miss that kitty. I opened my sheet and immediately had some red notifications. My spell list was flashing and it said spell limit was 4! Oh shit! I was sure if Simba was still here he would be laughing at me. I had 10 spells. The red notification thankfully just said I could not learn an 11th spell until my intellect reached 111.

Spell tailoring was one of the more fun aspects of casting. Maybe I should have chosen to be a mage? Too late now. So I could choose two skills to ‘supercharge’. Artistry: Drafting was definitely at the top of my list. Drafting buildings with bonuses was just too good a benefit for my village. My second skill though… I narrowed it down to either Earth Magic, Masonry or Woodcraft. All building skills but my earth magic was also heavily related to my combat style. Ugh why did this have to be so hard! I decided I could hire people with masonry and woodcraft skills so selected Earth Magic before changing my mind.

My two foci skills moved to the top of my skill list my reading skill which also did not count toward my total. And just like that I now had 24 skills counting toward my 23 cap. My penalty was…1%. Why did Simba say to check out the updates for skill penalties? I looked for the update and…oh. It skilled by prime number tier now. 1%,2%,3%,5%,7%,11%, 13%, 17%... So to be safe I should limit myself to just 3 skills beyond the cap. Once I hit level 25 I would get three more skills with my profession.

I spent the morning paging through the updates. I only got through about 5% in the few hours I spent. Jaesmin had already left to start work on repairs in town. I had too much to do. I went into town and the square in front of the general store was crowded with dozens of people.

I approached and the trader and his wagon had returned. The townsfolk gave way and continued examining a large spread of items on tables. Some were buying and some were selling. The trader masterful handled everything. When I got to the trader I asked for his attention and the townsfolk quieted down.

I asked him about sheep first. I got the list from my interface and he quoted me a price of 88 gold and two weeks to get them here. Almost a whole platinum for sheep? I got Elice to pay him for the sheep as I needed them to fulfill the quest for Zion. I also told Elice to stock our general store with goods giving her a budget of 200 gold. I asked him about building plans. Unfortunately he didn’t have any on him but he could get them. He asked what I needed. Well I needed plans for an auction house. He thought in it for a while and then said 300 gold and he would bring it with the sheep.

It was painful to pay that but I did and left before I spent any more town funds. I went to find the enchanter and see if my town portal was completed. I found her laying out complex runes in gold wire and then ‘pushing’ the wire into the stone, activating the rune. The runes were black and shimmered slightly. Sanso was nearby working on a road to the inn and another to the other plaza near the general store.

“How are things Persephone?” I asked not hiding my excitement at her progress. She had inscribed runes around 80% of the perimeter.

“Extremely well. I think I will finish before dinner. I am not certain but my best guess is the range of this portal stone will be around 3000 miles. Don’t worry it can be upgraded with better materials in the future but pushing any more magic than that through it would burn it out. It is does look marvelous. Go over there and what as the sunlight plays on the runes…they seem to dance.” She said with excitement of her own. I was glad she was breaking down her RBF (resting bitch face). She was right. The portal stone looked amazing at the right angle.

“I wanted to let you know I have ordered plans to build an auction house. I should get them in two weeks so I an doing what I can to make good on my promises.” She nodded and tuned me out as she focused on her work.

I decided to pull Sanso and Jaesmin with me to go work on the brewery…well after we got lunch at the inn.

*Roasted Chicken with Shallot and Garlic Crust, +2 to all stats for 2 hours*

I made a note to never ever make Fareth upset.

The brewery was a very simple building but fairly large. I might have made its capacity a little too much for our little town. During the day I did notice some of the farmer fields in the distance had storm clouds hover over them…probably Manto ‘helping’. I did notice my bonuses to regeneration had boosted my regens.

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| --- | --- | --- |
| Health | 8.47 | per min |
| Stamina | 8.60 | per min |
| Magic | 15.02 | per min |

I had vested quite a bit into my magic pool and now I was reaping the benefits. Manto still outclassed me. He told me he was a little over 60 per minute with his regen.

We completed the entire foundation of brewery and most of the first floor walls. As we were headed back to the inn we noticed a crowd had gathered around the portal stone. A loud pop occurred and someone disappeared. That person returned as we got closer. It was Persephone.

“Just testing it out. Popped down to Stillwater and back. Just 240 magic each way.” She was beaming at her work. I returned it. We could now fast travel. I walked onto the stone and nothing. What the?

Sanso asked, “Are you trying to go somewhere? Did you touch the portal stone at the location you want to travel?” Oh that was right I hadn’t connected my personal network to any other portal stones.

“Can you send me somewhere?” I asked hopefully.

“Sorry Tallis. I can supply the magic but you need to envision the location.” He said. Guess I was going to need to Titan a workout soon.

There was already a massive celebration starting at the inn. Most of the town was cramming in there and Fareth had numerous appetizers out for everyone. I told Jaesmin to go and enjoy herself. I had to got to my drafting table. I needed to work on a plans to improve the smithy. As I was walking Curraen fell into steep next to me and asked me for a minute on my time.

“Lord Tallis I have heard that there may be some dusk elves coming to Malcum? Galana said sixteen?” He asked and I was worried were this conversation was going but the concern in his voice.

“Yes do I need to be worried?” I asked.

“No, no!” He waved his hands. “Dusk elves have a bit of a mythos to them. The dark elves live in the Underdark, you have heard of them?” I nodded. “Well they raided the surface elves for millennia. To stop the constant surprise raids he commissioned an elven special forces unit to train to delve into the Underdark and raid the dark elves as they raid the surface. These elves were the best hunters and warriors from numerous elven nations.” He paused. “They succeeded you know. The dark elves stopped raiding the surface. For hundreds of years the dusk elves stood on guard and acted as liaisons between the surface and Underdark. There was a peace.” He stopped talking and thought before speaking.

“The dusk elves disappeared. It must have been maybe 500 years ago? Maybe more. I am not sure when. All contact with the dark elves ceased as well and no one knows where the dusk elves went. Since the dark elves didn’t start raiding the surface again no one has thought much on it. But some of us…sun elves that is…believe the dark elves were consolidating their power to surge back to the surface. If these are truly dusk elves…then maybe you could ask why they have abandoned their duty to safeguard the surface from the Underdark?”

*You have been offered an epic quest. History of the Dusk Elves Accept Y/N?*

Oh that game admin is going to be so mad. I hit accept. With the Dusk Elves coming to me this should be an easy layup. But why did the quest not list any rewards. It said epic quest…there should be epic rewards? I thanked Curraen for the knowledge and went home to draft my plans for the…hopefully epic…smithy.