



Season 5

Patch 5.1

Back in 2019 I had an idea for a zone based around muscular orcs description,

“ A muscular orc wanders about, searching for a new clan.

Disdain shows right through his face, no doubt aimed at previous clan members. He snarls angrily as he stomps through the woods. I'd leave him alone if I were you.”

It raised questions with me - what clan? The Fallen Tower orcs? What is the story of Fallen Tower - what is this Elvish tower and do orcs and elves have conflict? What even is an orc in the world of Ishar? Thus started a long journey at trying to answer those questions, and rose “Orcan Clans”. The initial release saw rise to an expansion to Jharet forest, another fallen tower (this time a military installation) within the foothills of the mountains, and a savage clan of orcs and their bonded companions, the wolves. It started to answer the questions, but very quickly I saw that my vision for the zone was severely limited by current capabilities, and so the release was abridged and many questions left unanswered still.

Since then many mechanics have arisen that have fundamentally changed Ishar - quests, affinities, elementals, full fledged racial reworks, and the list goes on. I stand behind all of these changes, but all of them were born in Orcan Clans. Finally, I had the tools to build what I had envisioned and finally, I am able to fully release it, as it was meant to be. I am very proud of the work that went into it, and I hope you all are able to enjoy it.

Orcan Clans

Orcan clans is finally fully released. The old weathered sign at the crossroads with the impassable northern fence has been removed, and with it, the path to the Skarag orcs has been opened. Traveling north, you will quickly find yourselves at the base of the northern mountains where the elements rage and the Skarag orcs have adapted to wield them.

Changes to Original Release

- 1) The original clan has been fully rebranded as the “Fangmaw”.
- 2) Various descriptions have been updated to fit with their fully established lore.
- 3) Racial skills are in full effect, powered by a new mob AI. Wolves on the Fangmaw side take advantage of this. They no longer “knock down” for x rounds, instead they have a couple of new abilities, which should all be familiar. You will similarly find that Saugrim and Maugrim are mildly different for the same reasons, they no longer rely solely on special functions, they instead lean partially on their status as powerful wolves.
- 4) All of the orc clerics in the zone have been changed to Shamans - this is every orc in Maugrim’s den.
- 5) Maugrim has received a new loot item. Dreadstaff has been changed slightly. Fangs of Maugrim have been changed.

- 6) There're more mobs on the outer path to add buffer to quests.

Quests

There're 15 new quests that have been added to Orcan Clans, centered around the elvish tower, Thal'adriel Watchtower and the war effort therein. Caution, though, the elves of Evermore are still recovering from the betrayal of humans and dwarves several centuries ago. They may be reluctant to open up, a wise adventurer would seek an official means of introduction.

Players who seek to gain the trust and aid the elves of Evermore in their endeavors in Jharet will receive great rewards, such as renown, commendations of the king and queen, and powerful new items.

The Skarag

As mentioned, the main new content of this release is the full other half of the zone, Skarag Mountain, home of the Skarag clan. This clan has adapted to the cold and brutal climate of the northern mountains, growing thick fur and hardy, and fully embracing shamanistic magic. Players will find new perils if they seek to challenge the mountain-dwelling clan, including a grand battle with the fierce Skyrazor - a massive, elemental Roc, and the counterpoint to Maugrim.

New Mechanics

In finalizing this release, several new mechanics are being introduced or tweaked. Some directly related to the content, others not.

- 1) Shaman has been released as a mob class. Every shaman is powered by my new AI, which will be monitored and adjusted before eventually being slowly rolled out to other classes. Various mobs around the MUD have been changed to Shaman - Goblin Shaman, Barbarian Shaman, Grue Shamans, Dwarven Shaman and Garok.
- 2) There is a new mechanic called "grapple". While "grappled", you will find yourself unable to do most anything.
- 3) Coincidentally, a major change has been made to spell casting. There is now a concept of spells that "don't require movement" to cast. This means they can be cast while sitting, crippled, or grappled. Currently this list extends to Blink, Cleansing Touch, Fade, and a shaman spell "Earthen Step".
- 4) Cooldowns - I have added the concept of "cooldowns" to skills. This is mostly directed at powering the new mob ai, but it was a natural fit for a few existing skills as well.
 - 1) Second Wind: Previously gave a buff that made you unable to use it again, now it just uses the cooldown mechanic.
 - 2) Taunt - now has a 1 round cooldown
 - 3) Wands / magic devices now utilize cooldowns to track, and therefore also benefit from cooldowns UI.
 - 4) When attempting to use a skill on cooldown you will receive a message like "Your head is still buzzing from the last device you used. (5 seconds)"
- 5) Summon now works on group mates regardless of level.

6) “Verbose SkillLevels” now also displays when you gain skill points.

Skills

While working on Verbose SkillLevels, I noticed a lot of issues with how skill gain worked, partially due to some work I did a while ago on stances. It was relying on some architecture that was deprecated, and didn't always work correctly.

In an attempt to untangle this mess, I rewrote how skill gain works all together. I cannot fully explain how it worked before to explain the differences, so will just explain how it works now.

For Skills (Spells remained untouched), when you successfully use the skill you will compete against an exponential curve to determine if you increase to the next value. The curve starts super shallow at low skills, and becomes quite steep near 99. This will mean that it is much easier to begin to master skills, but potentially takes more time to get them to superb. The numbers will need to be adjusted, especially for skills that are used constantly in combat.

Additionally - skill decay has been temporarily disabled. We're trying out new things this release.

Shopkeepers

I am trialing something new - shopkeepers no longer use “real” money for any transactions - they will always buy things for the same value.

You will still find shopkeepers that will buy and sell things for more favorable rates, but you will not find shopkeepers that are too poor to buy what you are offering.

This does have the side effect that shopkeepers also don't “gain” money when you pay for their services. Fumbles will no longer give a refund when you kill him after you pay for his services.

I think this is a strictly positive change - although I'm sure there will be heartache over losing the refund. It will make looting mobs and carrying around their junk much more valuable, as you'll be able to find consistent sales for them. Again - this is also an improvement for treasure as jewelers were frequently too poor to afford valuable gems.

Quest Improvements

Quests have received several improvements while I added the quests to Orcan Clans.

- 1) There is a new concept of “quest objects”, which allow everyone who has the quest to loot them. I.e. Faliah's head. When Faliah is killed and the head is in her corpse to be looted for the quest “Breakup the Ring”, instead of only 1 person being able to loot it, it'll be present for *everyone* who has the quest to loot it.
 - 1) This has been extended to city guard supplies. It has not, at this time, been extended to the unicorn horn, as this has use outside of the quest. Nor has it been extended to chunks of shine rock, as that's an intentionally grindy quest.

- 2) I have added the concept of “asymmetrical quests”, where you start them at one mob and complete them at another. This is heavily utilized in Orcan clans, pay attention to the quest log and who it asks you to return it to.
- 3) If a Quest Giver is hidden, but has a valid quest for you, you will be able to see them.
- 4) I have improved starting a quest to print out the dialogue “after” the quest intro, instead of before.
- 5) Sometimes starting a quest will also give you an item related to the quest.

Bug Fixes

- Automatic challenge cycling should now properly occur.
- Fixed a bug with tempest not using the correct criteria to trigger.