

Runesmith 101

[Chapter 101 Future plans.](#)

“There we go...”

Thud

Roland pushed the large log with the propeller connected to it into the hole like last time. This was the last wind turbine which made it the third one that was now in his backyard. Bernir was close by to fill out the hole with rocks and this world’s version of cement.

“I think this puts us a bit in the red this month...”

With his expansion continuing through the months that Bernir was hired Roland was slowly burning through his money. Due to the nature of these wind generators he wanted to make them with the best materials, he could afford.

The lumber they were made from was also quite special. The fantasy wood was very resistant and would be unaffected by the elements. There were also metallic parts inside which were mostly composed of deep steel which also had various appealing properties.

The magical alchemistic materials that the copper wires were coated in also weren’t cheap. They would also need to connect them to the four corners of the fence with the runic structures that delivered electrical shocks to any unforeseen guests. Now even more after he made a public appearance in the city and beat up some thugs.

“Should not be a problem after we receive the money from the auction house.”

“Yeah, wish they would lower the margins though...”

Roland was a bit maddened by the high transaction fee that this particular auction house was giving him. There was only one of them in this city and they even increased the margins after finally expanding in size.

This was also one of the reasons a black market started to appear. Bernir mentioned some rumors which they couldn’t confirm but it was quite natural for it to spring up. The information also carried something else, if a black market was being made then the thieves guild wouldn’t be far behind. The city was finally becoming something to be desired which would bring the criminal element over.

“I did spend a lot on that item, the prices here are ridiculous.”

The biggest reason they were close to being bankrupt was the ‘toy’ that he bought. While waiting for the guild to respond to his complaint they had spotted an old runic golem toy. It was about thirty centimeters in height and made from rock but it was somewhat functional.

Its design left a lot to be desired. From what he could tell it was supposed to look like a turtle but the craftsmanship wasn’t that great. The thing looked like a big jagged rock with four legs attached to it and a little head with stones for eyes. The uses were also limited but it could very slowly react to some basic spoken commands.

“Agni didn’t seem to like it that much, I think he thought it was another pet.”

An image from the previous day popped into Roland’s head of the time Agni saw the ‘turtle’ walking through the backyard. The little wolf pup actually tried attacking it after a few sniffs, luckily Roland managed to peel him off the rock turtle without much damage happening.

Now with a basic golem in his possession, he would be able to work on that automated operating system. Regretfully it proved to be quite convoluted and with a lot of lines of code. It would probably take him weeks or maybe months to get through it fully before being able to add his own flare.

The small puppy was still in his unevolved state as Roland was keeping it from progressing. The skill related to mana stones was close to maxing out now so the joyous occasion would probably be happening within this month’s time.

“Okay, let’s wait for this to set. This should be enough energy to run the whole workshop for now.”

Since Bernir’s accident, he was allowed down into Roland’s workshop. All of the runic tools were down there which his assistant was now allowed to use. They would remain down there for now while the dummy workshop was still used for disguise purposes.

Due to this, he decided to let Bernir expand the log shack to the side. If any thieves came around he would at least not be inside the workshop during the robbery. He was even planning to connect the two parts with a tunnel and put in a runic thumbprint of sorts.

With more gear at larger items came the need for expansion. He was going to be working on a prototype golem design that would need more space. The first one would be small and portable but later on, Roland did want to make it at least human-sized.

A group of golems patrolling the premises would probably keep most people away but also paint a bullseye on his house. Only people having things worth protecting would spend so much money and time on costly defenses. It would be clear to anyone outside that there was money to be made by performing a little robbery.

“Excuse me, I have a letter to a Mr. Wayland.”

While the two blacksmiths were about to get something to eat a voice of a young boy was heard from behind the gate. Roland expected this letter to arrive at about this time.

“Please leave your signature here.”

After showing the courier his adventurer card and signing his name he was delivered a letter. On it was the date of the guild hearing that he signed up to. Roland wasn’t wearing his armor anymore, the cat was out of the bag so there was no reason to hide. Soon the boy left and Bernir peeked at the letter.

“W-what’s the date?”

“In three days, you better wash up and put on some good clothes, the guild master might be there.”

Roland chuckled while reading through the contents of the letter. Besides the date, there was also the location which was of course at the guild. He was to show up there with any evidence that could confirm his case.

It took close to a week for this date to be set up. The people from the guild had shown up at his doorstep a few days ago. They had questioned him and Bernir about the day and Roland had even taken them to the spot where his assistant was brutally assaulted.

After getting more information they had left but beforehand they had asked him if he really wanted to continue with the process. He knew that there were ways of clearing this up on the down-low but that wasn't his aim. Roland didn't want any money or guild benefits, he just wanted unqualified people like Armand to be punished for their unprofessional behavior.

If the guild master would actually punish him remained to be seen. Nevertheless, he at least wanted to judge his character. By knowing the guild master's thought process he would know how to act around him. There were a couple of ways this could go.

It was possible that he would just dismiss the whole thing and do nothing. Armand would remain as an instructor and test other recruits as previously. Nothing would change and no one would be punished either.

This was more of a neutral option but the worst would be if Roland got punished instead. Armand was throwing his weight around as if he wasn't afraid of any repercussions. If the guild master revealed himself to be his uncle or the sort then Roland could be in a heap of trouble.

Then was the option of it going his way. Armand would be removed from his position, maybe even fined. Taking away the thugs guild cards would also be a nice bonus to this whole predicament. In Roland's opinion, they should serve jail time for acting like common thugs and also making the guild look bad in the process. But he carried out some vigilante justice himself so he might also suffer.

"Can't I wear my regular clothes?"

Bernir replied while Roland was going through the possible outcomes. His half-dwarven friend had a certain lack of items. Clean clothes were one of them, the two men living here together were a little out of their element when it came to fashion and keeping things clean.

"I think you need to go buy a new shirt... and new pants..."

Roland glanced at the various stains on Bernir's clothes. There were also burn marks from some blacksmithing, those sparks and embers sometimes did make it past the blacksmith's apron.

"Maybe I should get someone to come to clean the house each week..."

He wasn't really that keen on mopping the floors and sweeping them. Bernir also had to work on his blacksmithing class so they minimized house cleaning and cooking.

"Hey Boss, have you ever thought about opening up a shop here? I bet you could sell some of those swords for more than at the auction house. Some of those merchants would pay double for a custom-made sword!"

Bernir was quick to change the subject of the guild visit. After spending some time crafting blacksmithing tools he had grown a need of sharing them. There was a particular need in each craftsman to show off their wares and it was the same for these two.

Even Roland liked his previous arrangement back in Edelgard. His name was known and people enjoyed his scrolls but here he was still someone without a well-known brand.

“A shop huh, I might need to at least hire a clerk best if it’s a woman...”

Roland knew that it was always best to have a good-looking salesperson at the forefront of your store. Many of the high-class stores used elven women for this very purpose as they were universally acclaimed beauties by almost all the other races. Bernir on the other hand wasn’t that good to look at but he would probably be good at explaining the items in detail.

“A woman? I could ask some of the girls from the pub, I bet all of them would sell their knickers to get out of working there!”

For some reason, his assistant started drooling while imagining things, probably ones involving bar wenches and him being their boss in the new store. First Roland would have to get things in order here before allowing more people to waltz in.

Bernir was fine but bringing more people bought in more trouble. He would have to come up with some good contracts to keep company secrets, he would also need a name for his company.

‘Wayland Industries? Hm... maybe something not involving my fake name...’

“I’m sure you’d love to give them job interviews.”

“You know me well, boss!”

“Before that, you can go get yourself some clean pants and a shirt.”

Roland tossed some coins towards Bernir as he was serious about the half-dwarf’s wardrobe. He at least had to make him look presentable to the adventurers, if you look more professional then people would take you more seriously.

“Okay boss...”

“Just ask some of those wench friends of yours for a fitting shirt, nothing too fancy.”

Bernir’s and Roland didn’t really have a knack for fashion. Both of them would rather create metal armor or other lighter gear to wear instead of formal clothes. Fancy dresses were more in line with nobles but merchants and high rollers were also using them.

“What are you going to wear, boss?”

“Me? Just the usual but without the helmet this time around...”

He was already known for being a weirdo that used shiny runic armor and wore it everywhere. There was no use of him getting a tunic to this occasion. The armor would also give him some protection in the case of something going wrong. Without it, he was nothing more than a failed mage and a somewhat competent warrior.

If Armand attacked him when he wasn’t wearing it and if he didn’t have any of his items the fight would surely go in his favor after a couple of exchanges. This was his biggest weakness as he heavily relied on

his runic items for battle. The only thing he could do was try to minimize them for such an occasion so that he could at least have something to use when in trouble.

There was also another theory he was working on, which involved scribing the runes on his own body. Unfortunately, there was a big problem with the deterioration. The mana would already eat through leather scrolls and burn them up. It would do the same to his skin. He might be able to produce one effect at the cost of his limbs and while giving himself third-degree burns.

At this point in time, it would be better to get the thinnest sheet of magic paper and just tape it to his body. At least he would have a one-time use item that wouldn't cause him to pass out.

Roland could actually think that putting some adhesive to one side of the scroll and then placing it on his body wasn't such a bad idea. Thanks to the direct contact with his skin he would be able to set it off at any time he wanted. It would probably be a valid way for a surprise attack after someone destroyed his armor.

"You sure love that armor don't ya? If only I had more mana..."

Bernir started sulking as he knew that if he asked, Roland would create some runic equipment for him. Being a carpenter and a regular blacksmith his stats weren't all that great. He wasn't suited for prolonged magical item use and would probably pass out quite fast if he ever tried to use Roland's crimson armor.

There were some ways of making mana boosting gear, most of them used special alloys that could actually absorb ambient mana from the surroundings. Then along with the mana stones, they would lower the casting requirements exponentially. They all had a large price attached to them which was several times higher than deep steel he was using. This metal was only resistant to runic deterioration but didn't add any other bonuses besides that.

"Yes, unless you find me a crate filled with blue mithril you can forget about it. Now, stop stalling, go get yourself that fancy shirt, and don't come back until you have it."

Time continued to pass and in a few days, it was finally time to get the hearing over with. Roland and Bernir appeared at the guild together. The half-dwarven assistant had bought a nice-looking white shirt along with some dark pants. It fit on him well and thankfully he was young so his belly wasn't protruding that much compared to all the regular dwarves.

"Remember, just answer the questions truthfully, if we're lucky this shouldn't take more than an hour."

"Okay boss..."

Roland also forced Bernir to get a haircut and somehow control that scruffy beard of his. He knew that looking professional during a hearing like this could move things in his way.

The two craftsmen entered through the main entrance without really turning any heads. At this point in time, Roland wasn't seen as anything out of the ordinary and was already known as Wayland the Runesmith.

They needed to wait for a second but in time the glasses-wearing receptionist herself walked up to them.

“Mr. Wayland, please follow me.”

Roland nodded as he and Bernir were led further into the building. This was one of the larger buildings in the city with many side rooms. Inside were various facilities that the guild used to make money but today they would be going into a middle-sized room.

‘I wonder what they will decide on...’

He didn’t have a good opinion of this guild so Roland wasn’t expecting much today. He at least hoped that some justice would be done today. With mixed feelings, he pushed the door open to where the hearing would take place. Inside were already people waiting for them, some known while others ones that he never saw before. It was time to get this over with.

[Chapter 102 Orphans](#)

“Hey Elodia, did something happen?”

Armand asked while dropping onto a chair. The wood started squeaking due to the man’s increased weight but somehow survived his large frame.

It was already past sundown and most of the young kids were fast asleep. The few candles that were lighting up this place made it hard to see but this was all that they could afford for now.

“Yes, could you explain this...”

Elodia, who was a worker at the adventurer’s guild, placed down a piece of paper on the nearby table. It looked like one of the many forms that could be found at the adventurer’s guild. Armand looked at the piece of paper from the corner of his eye not really knowing what this was about.

“What is this?”

“Read it.”

Elodia waited while tapping her foot on the wooden floor. Armand raised a brow for a moment but finally leaned over to grab the piece of paper. He was nervous that they were having this talk as he thought that Lobelia had snitched on him.

After catching up to the half-elven girl he had managed to convince her to not tell anyone about what had happened that day. This required a little bribe but it would keep him from having to explain it to Elodia here.

He started going through this piece of paper and the more he read the more his forehead went up. This was a copy of the form that Roland had filled out. Elodia knew that this was against the guild rules but she would bend those slightly for one of her own.

“That bastard! Where is he, I’m going to...”

Armand ripped through the piece of paper in a fit of rage. On the form that Roland filled out was a detailed recount of what had happened that day. It listed the name of the party that attacked Bernir and the people involved. Roland had asked his assistant about it and filled everything in.

There was also a recount of Armand's involvement. How he ignored Roland's advice and didn't want to go to the guild to clear everything up. Roland had specifically written that he had asked Armand many times to stop fighting and go resolve it with the guild but was ignored instead.

He also mentioned that the whole fight endangered the citizens in the city and that Armand was not fit to work for the guild. There were also some demands in there, one was for Armand to be fired from the guild and put on probation.

A probation period could be put on a guild member for various reasons. It would cause them to not be able to use some of the facilities and also get less money for their work. This was mostly done to punish people that didn't perform their missions on time or failed them multiple times in a row.

"Sit down!"

Elodia raised her voice at Armand that jumped up to his feet, the ruckus even brought the half-elven girl over that was already listening in from the other side. She was there when her big sister called Armand over and she was afraid that he was in for a scolding.

"Hey you two, why don't we calm down. Armand if you raise your voice this much you'll wake up the little ones you big doofus."

Lobelia whispered after closing the door behind herself.

"Lobelia, you know something about this, explain yourself."

Elodia knew that the young half-elf girl was hiding something from her as Armand and she was acting strange ever since a few days ago. Even now she was convinced that they were hiding some facts.

Finally, after some glares from their big sister Armand and Lobelia opened up. They recounted the story from their point of view. Armand wanted to paint himself as a noble warrior that just wanted to help some friends from the guild. Roland on the other hand was described as a mustache-twirling villain that just beat up everyone that looked at him.

"You are friends with that Devyn?"

Elodia recalled hearing that name. There were some previous complaints against that man and his party. They seemed to have been extorting tier 1 adventurers but whenever someone reported something they soon took that claim back. It was rumored that Devyn and his thugs were threatening them but without evidence or any witnesses, the guild couldn't punish them.

"I told you not to associate with people like those! And what were you doing in that district to begin with?"

The angry woman glared at both Armand and Lobelia that felt attacked. She only used one of her tracking skills to search for her idiot party member. Now she was also being questioned about her wandering close to the red light district of the city.

"I didn't do anything wrong, it's all that guy's fault!"

"The guild might not see it your way..."

Armand was quickly corrected.

“How would they? I’m sure the old man will see it my way.”

Elodia gave out a sigh after hearing Armand still not admitting that he was in the wrong in any shape or form. She thought back to a time long passed where she had to take care of this idiot brother of hers.

This was an orphanage that she helped set up in the city. The three of them also came from one of them, everyone decided to move here when the new dungeon became known. She was forced to transfer here by the guild and these two followed after. With time they bought out one of the larger houses to help the children with no parents.

“Stop calling the guild master like that. This time around he might not be able to help you... or could choose not to...”

“What do you mean?”

Armand asked while trying to talk quietly. Elodia gave out a sigh while gathering the pieces of paper that were previously a copy of Roland’s form.

“It doesn’t matter, can’t you just go to this Wayland and apologize? He seemed like a reasonable person, he might take back his complaint.”

She knew that Armand was throwing his weight around lately, even more since he was close to the hundredth level. His pugilist class would be maxed out at 150 and then he would be able to select a more prestigious one. The praises from stronger adventurers and the guild master only made him more arrogant. She knew that the guild leader might see this as a chance to take him down a peg.

“Me apologize? Never! I would never apologize to a coward like that.”

“Coward?”

Elodia asked with a raised eyebrow.

“Yes, we could have resolved it like men but instead he went and done this!”

“Like men?”

She asked once more while progressively sounding colder. A vein on her forehead started to appear while she grasped a book from the side.

“With a one-on-one fight, of course!”

Armand struck a battle pose but soon was hit with a large book straight to the face.

“Didn’t you already lose a one-on-one fight to him before? What would have happened if Lobelia didn’t arrive on time?”

The glasses-wearing woman alluded to the second fight that Roland and Armand had. If the half-elf didn’t arrive it looked like Armand would have lost the fight as his skill was taking a toll on him.

“You even asked her for help, who is acting like a coward now?”

A barrage of books and pottery descended on Armand's face as Elodia started shouting at Armand's flawed logic. It was obvious that he had a thick head and unless someone beat him down hard enough he wouldn't give an inch.

"Hey s-stop, the fight never finished so I never lost!"

Armand shielded himself with his large hands while slowly evacuating from this room. From his perspective, the fight never reached a conclusion. In his experience, there was always a chance for a reversal during combat. One lucky punch was all that he needed to win the fight. Even though his skill deflated him quite a bit he did have another trump card waiting. He was confident that if he timed it well he would be the one standing victorious.

"Stop being a child and go apologize!"

"Never!"

The conversation ended with Armand escaping through the door and quickly running out of the room. Some of the older kids were laughing at him, pointing fingers as the large man escaped outside.

"Get back here this instant!"

"Ahh... think we won't see him back tonight, you know how stubborn he gets... Do you really think he might lose his position in the guild?"

While holding a wooden plate up that she wanted to toss at the escaping Armand, Elodia gave out another sigh.

"It's a possibility, I don't know if that person will let it end unless that idiot gets punished in some way. The guild master is also interested in him..."

Elodia was part of the guild and stayed informed. She knew of the person named Wayland the Runesmith. He was low key but ever since the advancement test he was getting inspected by the guild information section. There was even a file on him that was slowly being filled out due to the guild master's interest in him.

"But if he loses his position then we will also lose all of our good selling rates!"

Staff members of the guild always got a better deal while selling things like mana stones and monster parts. They also could buy things like health potions at a lower price while just having to do some side work.

Armand didn't actually need to work that much, he was mostly used to perform tests on new tier 2 adventurers just like he did with Roland. Then sometimes he would be asked to perform certain quests by the guild that he couldn't refuse. Those could range from fetch quests to escort missions to other cities.

People like him were given the position to act as a more trusted and elite force that the guild could use. They mostly went to work when a high-paying client showed up and the guild wanted to be sure that the request would go through. They didn't want random adventurers making them look bad in front of influential people. Thus they would hire promising prospects to perform these tasks.

“I know... this month might be tight...”

Lobelia frowned at the prospect of losing Armand’s premium rates. She was part of his party so she would also be affected. Part of her income went to this place as well, they would be losing about 10% of their monthly wages if this happened. This apparently for the reason that their big brother wasn’t able to halt his violent ways.

“Where does this Wayland live? I’ll go and ask him to drop the complaint!”

“That wouldn’t be a good idea, just help me clean this place.”

There were scattered books and other items around this room after Elodia unleashed some pent-up rage on her younger brother. None of the people here were related by blood but everyone was treated as part of the family.

“But big sis... what if I can convince him otherwise. No man can resist my charms!”

The elven girl puffed out her chest as if trying to show off her assets. The big sister just glanced at this chest and gave it a pat.

“Maybe first try growing something here before you try charming anyone.”

Lobelia’s pose quickly changed as she slumped forward, her hands covering her chest which was on the smaller side.

“I... I’m still growing...”

“It might actually be better if we don’t convince that man to take back the complaint.”

Said Elodia while Lobelia looked confused.

“How would that be better, we will lose money!”

“That we will but maybe that idiot might learn something from this.”

Lobelia looked to her big sister and after thinking for a moment she nodded. Her older brother’s behavior had been deteriorating ever since the guild master became interested in him. She knew that he had gone through a rough childhood, most of his problems were always resolved thanks to his fists.

“He needs to understand that not all of his problems can be resolved with fists alone.”

Both of them nodded at each other and agreed not to go see Wayland. They hoped that this would teach Armand some humility but that was only if the guild favored Wayland’s claim. They were still part of his family though and didn’t wish for any bad outcomes. Elodia wished that Armand would see the error of his ways but still didn’t want him to get banned from the guild which was a possibility.

The two continued to clean and finally, the day of the hearing was upon them. Armand being his stubborn self never returned to the orphanage directly and talked through Lobelia while evading his older sister.

“Haven’t had one of these in a while and it’s against Armand and some tier 2 adventurers?”

An old man asked while looking over some papers. Roland would recognize this person as the man that helped him with Agni.

“Yes, Mr. Wilser.”

“And it’s that young man that is making the complaint?”

“Yes, Mr. Wayland.”

“Hm...”

The small gnome rubbed his chin while thinking back to the armored man that he taught some basics about monster taming.

“The hearing will be starting in ten minutes, Mr. Wayland is already here and waiting.”

Elodia was talking while looking into the distance. She could see Roland in his usual red armor but this time around his helmet was to the side. What she saw was quite the handsome young man with a strong jawline. He looked to be someone that wasn’t even in his twenties but she knew that looks could be deceiving and he could be much older.

“Well, at least he took off that silly helmet this time around.”

The gnome scoffed a bit while looking over the papers.

“Let us get this over with, there is much work to be done today.”

Elodia nodded while the old man walked away and into the room where the hearing would be taking place. Soon after Armand finally appeared at the scene along with the guild master.

Even though Armand was already a large man, the guild master dwarfed him by quite a bit. He was from a race that was considered small giants known for their physical strength and warrior classes.

“Our little Armand has gotten himself into trouble, isn’t that right Elodia?”

The guild master appeared with a big smile on his face. It was clear that he wasn’t taking this very seriously but Armand that was next to him wasn’t smiling.

“Who are you calling little? Why are we even here old man, you can just dismiss this.”

It seemed that her younger brother was still adamant in his beliefs. Luckily even though the guild master was finding this whole predicament hilarious he was still carrying out his duties.

“I don’t know? Should I?”

Elodia stood there while hugging some papers against her chest. She still could not come to terms with how Armand acted around the guild master. The large man had somehow grown to like this small brother of hers and even helped him train. Though it was always a one-sided beatdown where Armand ended up defeated.

“Yes you should or just let me fight him one on one!”

“Hoho, so you almost losing to him twice wasn’t enough?”

"I never lost to him!"

"That's not what little Elodia here reported to me."

The old man laughed while giving her a little wink. She didn't react in any way, just continued to stare at the two idiots with scorn.

"That's only because of that armor if he fought me fairly..."

"Fairly huh?"

The smile that the old large male had plastered all over his face finally faded. He turned to Armand that was trying to explain himself but before he could a large fist descended onto his head. He was quickly pressed to the ground due to the guild master's hit, almost getting hit out cold.

"If you think that the armor is the only reason that you lost, then you still have a lot to learn, boy. Now stop whining like a wench and get in there."

The guild master grabbed Armand by the neck and yanked him into the room where the hearing would be taking place.

"Elodia, tell them to get a move on, we don't have all day."

Soon she walked over to the side of the accusers and guided them inside this room. In it, besides the guild master and old gnome, there were two other guild members. The only side that was missing was the party of five thugs that attacked Bernir.

"Mr. Wayland and Mr. Bernir please take a seat, we will start the hearing soon."

Elodia said while greeting Roland it was finally time to get this hearing started.