

Runesmith 107

[Chapter 107 Don't like where this is going.](#)

"I should just activate it?"

"Yeah, do it as many times as you can."

"Okay, boss."

Bernir and Roland were standing outside in the backyard. Agni was in the background chasing his own tail while the two were performing some tests.

While holding a meter-long iron tube Bernir started to insert mana into it. This tube had a couple of mana stones attached to them and they lit up the moment the runic components were activated.

"Hm?"

Bernir could feel that a quick burst of high pressure was released from this tube but nothing besides that. The initial activation made his hand jerk due to the blowback. He looked at Roland as if he was wondering if this was all.

"Continue."

Roland replied while watching his assistant activate this metal tube six times before reaching towards his forehead.

"Six times before the first headache?"

"Yes Boss, ouch this stings, I don't know how you do it."

Bernir started to rub his temple as a similar sensation of when a person ate ice cream too fast washed over him. He wasn't sure why Roland gave him this tube but he figured he would disclose the information soon.

"Good... now..."

Roland took the tube back and inserted something into it before giving it back to his assistant. Bernir peeked inside but couldn't really make out what his boss placed in there.

"Okay, now point it at the dummy and activate it again."

After getting a low-grade mana potion Bernir looked at a straw dummy that he had made a day before. Roland ordered him to fashion one made from wood for testing some new items. The dummy looked more like a scarecrow as Bernir didn't really have any experience in making ones before.

"Sure, activating now!"

He held it out with two hands this time around and also gripped it harder as he was now used to the knockback. The moment he activated this tube again he could see a round marble shooting out of it and going in the general direction of the straw dummy.

The moment this large marble connected with the dummy a small explosion occurred. This caused Bernir to jump back and fall onto his butt while Roland just observed it while standing next to him.

“Hm, not bad... but I think you need some aiming practice...”

One side of the dummy had been blown away by this explosion. Roland was just testing a new weapon that he intended to give to his assistant. Bernir had a meager mana pool which didn't allow for much runic equipment. Due to this Roland decided to go with the disposable item route, scrolls to be specific.

This design was a smaller version of his runic grenades that he once used against the bandits. That time around he just threw the round casings which had his scrolls inside them. Now he wanted to design a sort of launcher so that Bernir would be able to defend himself from attackers.

First, he needed to test Bernir's mana capacity and how many times he would be able to use his new weapon. Then he would just need to come up with a design that was easy to aim with. Things like grenade launchers from his own world came to mind but here a person wouldn't need a trigger but just to inject some mana.

It looked like six shots would be the limit for Bernir before he would need to drink a mana potion. Thus an enlarged cylinder with six chambers for ammo would need to be made. He could always just give Bernir regular spell scrolls for protection, but having a weapon like this would help with aiming and a faster rate of fire.

Roland was a bit surprised that no one came up with such a design. Most people still preferred to just use regular spell scrolls while holding them out against their enemies. Maybe due to the lack of gun-related technology, no one was interested in innovating in that direction. From what he knew only large cannons like on the merchant ship he made the trip here existed.

They were mostly relegated to siege weapons or defenses on castle towers. If you took into consideration that high level archers could outperform modern-day firearms then it made sense. His assistant on the other hand wasn't so good at throwing bombs, thus something he could steady his aim with could be a lifesaver.

'I guess no one really cares about making weapons for the non-combative classes...'

“Okay, that should do it. Think we can move on to producing a prototype.”

Roland wondered if there would be a market for such items. This weapon made sense to him who could actually produce the ammo himself. But for an adventurer paying one large silver or more for one mini grenade would quickly bankrupt them.

“Aye boss, but you shouldn't forget about the guild. Don't forget the letter arrived.”

Roland grabbed the prototype rod that would be used for the launcher barrel. He wasn't really sure if he wanted to make it a six-shooter or just a single. Bernir could just pop the grenade in through the top for a quick reload which would simplify things but also make them slower.

He was not someone that had ever been interested in guns that much, so he could mostly just borrow his ideas from the media he consumed and the current world's technology.

“Yeah, I remember.”

'Did the guild master get those items for me?'

The bald guild master had promised to find him the manufacturing details for mana alloys along with how to build the smelter for it. It had been a couple of weeks since then but only now had word reached them. There was also a possibility that he wasn't able to procure it and he would just give him the same sales pitch as before.

"I'll go there today, stay here with Agni and train up those skills."

Bernir had also finally advanced to the tier 2 Armorsmith class. From what Roland was told the item that he had to make was a half-plate armor. Half-plate armor was similar to plate armor but lacked some parts like leg protection and a helmet.

When asked about the time limit Bernir was surprised. He was apparently allowed to take his time and only when he was done the final product was tested by the class up system. Roland wanted to file a complaint to the people that made this system. He always received a timer and had to rush through things. The reason for that was probably the rarity of the classes that he went for. Bernir chose the most generic one which made the tests quite easy.

It was still a tier 2 class though and with it, Bernir was the proud owner of the Armorsmith class. Now finally he would be able to craft the armors that he always dreamed about. With the added skills this would become easier.

Roland had also taken in some knowledge that Bernir had to offer. He was the son of a dwarven blacksmith that had also been an armorsmith apparently. Thanks to this Roland could learn a couple of smithing techniques that he wasn't clued in. With this more advanced tier 2 class and heightened dexterity, it was easy to replicate what Bernir was proficient in.

"Aye boss, I'll use these if anything happens so you don't need to worry."

Bernir pointed to his hip where he had a couple of card-sized scrolls. The weapons weren't ready so the best defense for Bernir were the magic scrolls. Roland wished to miniaturize this grenade launcher as much as he could, make it more portable like a real gun. For that, he needed to further his compression skill.

'Just too many things to do...'

Roland had been having trouble focusing on one thing lately. Agni needed further training as his level didn't go up much since he evolved into the larger form. He also was working on his golem design and still decrypting the runic code that would be the basis for it.

Then there were his own skills and the defenses for his home, plus he also needed to be making weapons and earn money to support himself and his assistant. At least with Bernir helping him out now, he wouldn't need to focus on armor as much.

The only downside to this was that the corresponding skills for armor crafting wouldn't be going up as much. He intended to combat this by making some armor parts together with his assistant, with some help he would be able to create more improvements and do it faster.

'Wonder if that baldy really got those schematics...'

Roland closed the door behind him while also telling Agni to stay and protect the house. The Ruby Wolf was quite intelligent and could follow simple orders like this. At this point he would not chase after him into the city, nor would he destroy the inside of the house if left alone.

It was truly astonishing how much a being could change by evolving. It was as if a five-year-old child changed into a fifteen-year-old teenager that could be now left alone at home by his parents. This didn't mean that he could leave him there for long, the tamed beast would come looking for his master if he vanished for more than a day.

Even though his face was already seen by the guild members he still was used to covering it up with his helmet. Roland's armor was repaired and shiny as ever, the mana stones made it look even more expensive.

He hoped to get this fixed with the mana alloy manufacturing method. It would let him be more inconspicuous as this armor made him stick out like a sore thumb. He wouldn't be surprised if someone decided to rob him one of these days just to get their hands on this piece of gear.

"Welcome Mr. Wayland, the guild master is in his office please wait here for a moment."

After coming to the guild he was greeted by the elven receptionist lady. The one wearing the glasses was still there but when he glanced her way she evaded his gaze. He wasn't sure but he attributed this to the way the hearing went and how she tried to sway it in one direction.

He wasn't really mad at her as she just wanted to protect someone from the orphanage that she was running. Roland was a bit preoccupied with himself so he wasn't paying attention to how the people in this world had problems of their own. Poverty and lack of food being one of the biggest of those problems.

When you looked at this kingdom and compared it to the modern world that he came from it was similar to a third world country. The nobles were more akin to warlords than to politicians. They could do anything they wanted in their own territory without really having to put up with the commoners.

The only thing that they would be afraid of would be people with higher tier classes. Strength was mightier than the coin in this world. Someone at a very high level could also throw their weight around. Unless they did something drastic no one would stop them.

This privilege only started after you approached tier 3 though and this was also one of Roland's main goals. Become as powerful as he could and then become free of the shackles that his noble birth was putting on him.

"You may enter now."

After waiting for a bit he was finally told to go to the guild master's office. On his way here he spotted someone coming down from the upper level. There were three people coming his way. The moment he looked at them he started to frown, luckily his face was covered by his helmet so they couldn't see it.

'Nobles?'

The man in the front was clearly not a commoner. The fabrics and style didn't match up to what an adventurer would be wearing either. He also had two guards following behind him, they were wearing

half-plate armor without any helmets. There was an unfamiliar crest that adorned their chest plate but it also confirmed his suspicions.

‘But not quite, ... a butler?’

After taking a moment to look at the ‘noble’ he noticed that something didn’t add up. The clothes were costly but the man didn’t fit the bill. He was more in line with a messenger sent by a noble which made more sense. Why would a noble venture into the adventurer’s guild by themselves and with only two guards?

“What do you think you are doing? Make way!”

Roland was a bit surprised by meeting this group so he had spaced out while walking forward. Due to this, he forgot to move to the side to let them through. Even if these people weren’t actual nobles they were part of their organization. Going against them was close to spitting on the crest that they were wearing.

Even if he didn’t like the treatment he knew that it was better to avoid any conflict. Thus, without replying to the angered ‘butler’ he decided to move to the side and let them through. Though he did show the proper manners the old man decided to give him a few chosen words before moving along.

“Damn uncultured adventurers! At least you are smart enough to know your place!”

The guards that were with this man gave Roland a harsh look before all of them moved along. The man in the middle didn’t look very similar to the butler back at home. That man had style and knew how to present himself. This person on the other hand was overweight and looked like a sleazeball. The clothes that he was wearing were also quite flashy as if he wanted to bring attention that he was part of the noble cast.

‘What was that all about? That crest... it does not belong to the noble house that owns this land...’

Roland stood there in the corridor while looking behind him. The people that passed him didn’t seem to belong to the estate that ruled this city. This was actually the first time that he had seen a worker from a noble house in this city.

Albrook was still in the process of development. More and more people were coming while searching for riches down in the dungeon. The noble house that ruled this area didn’t seem to be that interested in this location. The most important spot was still the super dungeon that was in the middle of this large island.

He turned around and headed up the stairs, the appearance of these people didn’t have to mean much. The most plausible reason that they were here was to give a specific mission to the guild.

If it was an important one then probably some of the higher-ranked adventurers would be forced to take it. These sort of missions tasked by nobles were mostly placed in the hands of the guild instructors. He was not planning to get involved with nobles, the pay might have been good but the dangers could be unknown.

While thinking about what the butler might have wanted from the guild master he knocked on the door.

“Come in.”

There was a little pause after he knocked but the guild master was inside. Roland opened the large door and could see a bald man sitting behind his desk while looking at some papers. His brows were furrowed and his forehead was showing a lot of wrinkles. Due to this Roland decided not to poke the hornet's nest.

"Sorry for the wait kid had to deal with a pompous fool, take a seat."

The old warrior stopped looking at the piece of parchment and Roland was allowed to sit. He removed his helmet now but he was glad that he didn't show his face to the worker from the noble house.

"Do you want to hear the good news or the bad news first?"

Roland looked up to the old man that had a smirk on his face while not really knowing what he was getting at.

"Good news?"

"Hah, I managed to find a dwarf that is willing to sell those manufacturing secrets..."

"... but?"

He replied as he realized that there was something off.

"But he is a greedy little bastard, here take a look..."

Roland was handed a piece of paper. After he looked at it he realized why this was the 'bad news.'

"Tell me that this price is in small gold coins..."

"You got a good sense of humor kid."

"This price is a bit..."

"Your skills are worth much, kid but not that much... if you want us to make a deal you'd have to cover half of that sum..."

Roland started making calculations in his head, of how much he would need to sell to make a dent in this bill. It would at least take four or more years until he could pay up.

"Don't need to frown that much kid. I can reduce that bill further but you'll have to do something for me..."

The guild master leaned back while showing off his pearly whites. Roland's forehead started to show a bit of a sheen as he didn't like where this was going...

[Chapter 108 Another expedition and preparations.](#)

"You want me to be a babysitter?"

"Hah, that's what I like about you kid, you catch on fast."

Roland was rubbing his temples while looking at the guild master. The man was dangling the manufacturing methods to the mana alloys and to the special smelter in front of him. The horrendous

price seemed like it was just an excuse to shove a particular mission on him, one that involved the nobles.

“This mission isn’t even that hard kid, you just join the expedition and protect those snooty noble brats.”

The guild master had already revealed what he wanted Roland to do. In a month’s time, a group of noble youths would arrive in this city. These kids were members of influential noble families that studied at the various noble academies.

Some would be from the knight academy, the same one that Roland was supposed to go to when he was still living at the Arden estate. He wasn’t sure if it was exactly the same one as there were more of them across this kingdom.

The knight academy wasn’t the only one that was sending young nobles over though. It was a joint venture with the magic academy. From what Roland knew this was something the older students had to do when they were close to graduation.

The academies would send them out to do missions like this. They would need to venture towards dungeons for a time with a couple of instructors and be judged. It was something like a rite of passage where they needed to prove that they could fight under pressure.

This dungeon had not yet fully been explored but the levels could be rated. The first ten levels were good for anyone to get the hang of it. The level Roland had been venturing to was also rated as something that silver adventurers like him would be able to handle. No monsters above the 150th level had been spotted which was the tier 3 barrier.

“Why do you want me to be there? I’m sure there are other adventurers...”

“Hah...”

The guild master gave out a sigh as his big grin subsided.

“I wish that was true but you recall our little Armand?”

“Yes...”

“He was actually someone that was more dependable than most of those other idiots...”

“You must be joking, how could he be...”

“Think you two got off on the wrong foot, he is surprisingly dependable when it comes to fighting.”

Roland didn’t reply to that as he started weighing the options. It seemed that this guild was still not fully operational. If they were then this guild master wouldn’t be asking him to take on an important mission like this.

They were talking about noble children here. They were the future of their houses, if something went wrong during the mission then their heads would roll. He would need to risk his life to protect those young brats on the off chance that a unique monster appeared.

“You worry too much kid, you’ll only be going into the volcano area. Those brats are there to gain some battle experience, they will also have instructors from the academy with them. You and the other adventurers will only need to guide them there.”

“And act as bait if something goes wrong?”

“Can’t hide anything from you kid but that’s why I like ya. Listen, you can either sign up for this mission or cover the costs for the items you want instead.”

“Let me think about it...”

“Sure, you have a week, those noble brats will be arriving in a month but before that, I need to have the team ready.”

This was understandable, the mission was quite important so the participants had to be picked wisely. There was always a certain ratio that went into a party of adventurers. The basic composition had some warriors along with backline supporters like archers. A healer would also be needed but those were hard to come by thus most people used potions instead. Then there were unique spots occupied by classes like mages that could fill more roles.

“I understand.”

After some more chit-chat, he finally left the guild master’s office. There were a couple of things he needed to think about. The most important one if it was smart to get involved with the nobles.

While heading home he contemplated on what was the correct thing to do. The guild master wanted him to be there due to his magic craftsman class. He did mention during the conversation that having someone there that could repair runic weapons would be handy. He would be also responsible for certain heat mitigating equipment that would be used.

Roland also proved himself to be stronger than Armand, who was close to the 100th level. This would put him close to gold rank adventurers that had to have a minimal level of 100 and capped out at 150. Past the 150th level was the tier 3 bump, after reaching that a person was able to advance from Gold to Platinum rank as an adventurer.

The mission was to venture below the labyrinth where he battled the Ruby Golem. Then remain in the lower regions for a few weeks. It was supposed to be a test for the noble sons and ladies that the academy organized.

Down below he would also need to answer to the nobles. The group of adventurers as he had mentioned before was there as guides and also meat shields. If something did go wrong they were required to use their bodies while the nobles escaped. This was only if there was some kind of unforeseen event.

If everything went as planned then it would be a very boring few weeks in a heated dungeon. He would only need to make some repairs to the equipment and together with the other adventurers work as a lookout. Yet because this was a mission given by the nobles he would receive a massive reward.

The high nobles were willing to pay a lot to have their kids protected. There would also be a Platinum rank adventurer coming along which made Roland consider this mission.

It was the fastest way of getting what he wanted, with the new technology he would be able to create a competent battle golem body. The only real downside was working with nobles that he wished to avoid.

The responsibility seemed to be high but the job looked to not be that hard. He had already ventured into the dungeon many times and the tier 2 monsters weren't really a problem. From his perspective, the mission wasn't that dangerous but mostly annoying. He would need to take orders from noble children and act as a chaperone.

'I wonder how those brats are doing...'

While walking through the city he started thinking of his own family. He did have three brothers and sisters, with just one sister being younger than him. Roland was seen as almost the youngest child in the family but if he added the age from his previous world he would be the oldest.

'I bet they don't even remember how I look by now.'

It had been many years since he had left that estate and was successful in slowly cementing his life here. He didn't feel like a noble anymore, just your regular commoner with a knack for crafting. Roland still felt a bit guilty about the lie that he told to Lucienne but the girl was really young back then, only three years of age. The possibility of him leaving a long-lasting impression on her was quite faint.

"That will be eight large silver coins."

Roland placed some items into his storage bag while looking at his coin purse. There wasn't that much left in there. After spending quite a bit on the golem toy and then further house renovations he was slowly becoming poor.

His savings that he received from his severance package while leaving Edelgard had also dried up. Most of it went into the house renovations and deep steel that he used for his runic armor.

If he wanted to get his hands on those manufacturing schematics he would probably need to take the job or wait some years till he had enough money. The biggest downside to this was the possibility of the offer not being on the table down the line.

He knew that these sorts of things were kept hidden from other races. The dwarves didn't like their secrets being spread around. The possibility of something like this being up on the auction was low. He would need to visit the black market for something like this and pay a premium price which might be even worse than what the guild master was offering him.

"I think you should take the offer boss, dwarven knowledge like that almost never leaves a dwarf forge."

Roland was now back at his own house. Both he and Bernir were down in the Runeforge crafting some gear. He had brought up this with his assistant as he also needed to know about this.

"You think so as well, huh?"

"I know those old fogies, they would never sell outside their little circle..."

Bernir replied with a somewhat annoyed tone. Roland knew that the half-dwarf had a run-in with many blacksmiths and they all denied him entrance. He knew well how this race liked to keep their secrets hidden and only allowed the techniques to be passed on to true dwarves.

“That guild master must be crafty if he managed to procure this kind of knowledge, wonder how he did it.”

Clang

Bernir’s hammer descended on some metal as he got it into the right shape. The young tier 2 craftsman was working on a breastplate. It wasn’t for him but to be sold off later after some mana stones and runes were added to it.

“He could have access to the black market, or someone owed him a favor...”

Brrrr

Roland replied while sharpening a sword on his runic grindstone. With the added wind turbines outside he and Bernir could use them at the same time. While working together Roland could also compare his smithing skills to Bernirs.

His assistant had lower stats, he couldn’t hold a candle to Roland’s dexterity and strength but he made this up with knowledge. Bernir had spent his young life looking at his father crafting, thanks to this blacksmithing came naturally. The only thing that slowed down his progress was him getting a carpenter job as his default class.

“Hm...”

Roland looked at his sword that was finished.

With some pointers and the right tools at his disposal he was finally able to make a higher grade item. After adding some highest graded runes this sword would go for quite the penny. Regretfully even with this it wouldn’t be enough to pay for those manufacturing schematics. He also needed to consider the costs of the golem that he was working on.

‘I think this will be the fastest way...’

Roland also felt that he was still too weak. Even at tier 2 he didn’t feel like he would be able to handle a tier 3 person in any way shape or form. The members from that cult were still engraved deep in his mind. The fear that he felt during that night was still something that haunted him to this day.

As things were now he felt that he would not be able to protect himself or the people around him. Bernir was a non combatant and Agni was quite young. Due to the money problem he wasn’t able to wander down into the dungeon as often and level his monster. He would gain experience from crafting but that would not be the case for Agni. The Ruby Wolf needed actual combat experience.

“Good sword boss, what are you going to put on it?”

Roland was brought out of his trance by Bernir.

“Enhanced sharpening and strengthening seems to be popular with these...”

He replied, these two enchantments were as popular as ever. There existed tier 2 versions of them that used up more mana but also produced better effects.

“Good choice.”

“Bernir, how do you feel about living here alone for a few weeks...”

This was one of the biggest issues with Roland venturing out to the deeper parts of the dungeon. Normally they would leave their most precious items in a vault in the workshop. It was protected by many runic traps and locks.

They would not leave for more than a day at a time. They would also take some of their items on the short expedition so even if someone robbed the house they would have part of their wealth. Now on the other hand he would need to leave the house in the care of his assistant. This would be the prime moment for any thieves to show up, when the strongest person was away.

“Don’t worry boss, I can take care of myself! ... Hey, stop looking at me like that!”

Bernir moved his head to the side as Roland wasn’t buying it. Not so long ago he was beaten up by adventurers without even landing one good hit. These thugs were then singlehandedly taken out by Roland.

“We have about a month...”

Roland rubbed his chin as he thought about the logistics. Bernir would need to stay here as he didn’t feel that he would be allowed to go. He also didn’t want to leave the house unattended for a whole month. If something did happen Bernir could still go to the city and ask for some help there.

‘I’d be taking Agni with me...’

He started to formulate a plan, one that involved Bernir defending this home alone. Agni would need to come with Roland as he feared that the wolf would not listen to Bernir. He could even wander down into the dungeon alone in search of his master. It was also a good opportunity for his wolf to earn some experience. They would be down there for a while so it was paramount to use this time to gain more power.

“I won’t be able to create the golem in a month but we can strengthen the fence... and you will need a weapon...”

“A weapon? I’m not really good with swords or axes...”

“I was thinking of something less close and personal...”

A plan for his future departure entered his mind. He started contemplating on what would be the best option for this dwarf. He came to the conclusion that ranged weaponry would be the best as Bernir didn’t possess any type of fighting skills. This could be circumvented by the use of magical items which Roland was able to create.

“After we are finished here... go buy me some magic ink and a lot of magic paper...”

The decision was made, he would be going down into the dungeon together with the nobles. Before that some preparations needed to be made. He would need to get this house and his assistant ready for whatever event that could go wrong.

He also remembered how his last expedition ended up. Roland needed to procure life-saving items for himself as well, if a tier 3 monster appeared he needed some kind of trump card. He already had a few ideas about that but it would cost more money.

“Think we will need to sell more items to the auction house this month, let’s get back to work!”

“Aye boss!”

The two craftsmen continued with their work. They needed more funds to create better equipment and time was running out. Luckily for them with the runic tools and fully operational wind turbines they would be able to hasten the process.

‘I might have to give that runic printing press idea a try...’

What Bernir would be getting would be a lot of runic scroll-related weapons. Along with a few others that Roland wasn’t quite decided upon.

Soon the hours and days started flying by. The weather continued to be warm and pleasant. Roland had confirmed that he would be participating in this expedition.

He was given the rundown by the Guild Master about what his duties would be. The leader of the party would apparently be a tier 3 adventurer that would arrive later from another guild. Roland’s duties would be to keep an eye out for the nobles and also to repair the weapons and armor along the way.

The faithful day of his departure finally arrived, what was left to do was do one last check before he said his farewells to Bernir and left the house in his care.