

Runesmith 109

[Chapter 109 Pre-Preparations](#)

The time for the dungeon expedition was just one day away. Roland and Bernir were both inside the workshop while Agni was keeping watch outside.

There was some business Roland needed to take care of at the guild today before the nobles arrived. He needed to meet up with his temporary party members as everyone would be given a specific job that would fit this mission. The party leader had apparently arrived and he would be assigning the positions.

This brought Roland back to that one other large expedition that he was a part of. That time he was relegated to the backline and placed in a team with lower-level adventurers. While this time his worth had increased he wasn't sure where he would end up in.

There was a reason why he wasn't worrying as much though. The guild master wanted his rune smithing skills, it would be counterproductive of him to send him towards his demise. That's why a position in the backline was more than likely.

Before going out to the city there were a few things that he and Bernir needed to discuss. He would be leaving together with Agni for a few weeks. Apparently, the noble youths needed to complete some sort of exam.

For this, they needed to last for a prolonged amount of time while surrounded by enemies. It was something that this kingdom thought out to train their younger generation for the coming battles.

This wasn't an era of peace and the nobles would be the future commanders and generals. Everyone needed to be able to protect themselves or at least know how to use their troops and ration their supplies.

From what Roland knew, he and the adventurers were more of a backup plan. They were there to guide the people inside and make sure that nothing goes wrong. The nobles from the academy would have their own soldiers and provisions that they needed to figure out how to use.

Only when something unexpected happened would the adventurers get involved. They were there to lure away any potential threats that the nobles wouldn't be able to handle. Things tended to go towards the unexpected in his life. Even at that previous expedition, he didn't think that he would get buried in the mine and then almost die against a tier 3 monster.

"Okay, let us go over this one last time..."

Roland handed Bernir an improved version of the 'runic grenade launcher' that he had built throughout this month. It did not look like a basic tube now but as a proper ranged weapon, not like one that you would find in this world though.

The most noticeable thing was the middle part which had a large-sized cylinder. It looked like an enlarged revolver cylinder with six chambers. It wasn't quite like it as there was a manual crank next to the grip of this launcher. Bernir would need to crank it to make the chambers rotate into place before firing off one of the runic grenades that Roland had prepared beforehand.

The handle was made from wood and fitted with Bernir's hands in mind. Being half dwarf left the young man with thick hands so even if Roland tried it he would be able to shoot this weapon.

There was a secondary grip at the front part that connected to the barrel. It was there to aid with the aiming as the weapon had some kickback to it. As with all of his creations this one also had some mana stones embedded in the design.

They were all green as instead of small explosions that were produced by gunpowder this one operated more like an airsoft gun. The mana usage was actually lessened with the wind pressure rune than if he used a small explosion-type rune instead.

For the ammo, he used small runic scrolls with various spells. It was all set up that when the orb that the scroll was in collided with something it would be activated. Most of them would just explode while causing residual damage with shrapnel that came from the metal casing. But there were various spell combinations that Roland had shown Bernir, if he was smart about it he could clear out more enemies with less.

Roland would like to have this weapon spin the chamber on its own but there wasn't any time to figure out the mechanism. He wasn't much of a gun nut in his previous life, so he went with a more mechanical approach and a crank that spun the cylinders around instead. The thing that he made was more of a portable runic cannon than a proper gun.

He even received the 'Cannon craftsman' title for it. Maybe if he was able to make a revolver or something similar he would be able to attain a Gunsmith title? Though he wasn't sure if he wanted to go in this direction. He already had reusable runic equipment that didn't require him to create reusable ammo. Someone like Bernir was more suited for that path choice as he didn't have any battle skills to speak off.

"You sure come up with peculiar things Boss."

Bernir held the portable 'cannon' in his hands and pointed it in a direction. He was a tier 2 blacksmith so it wasn't that hard for him to use it with one hand either.

"Remember to only use this when you really need it and keep your distance. Most people should just run after a few warning shots."

"Aye, I'd be running for the mountains if someone used this thing against me..."

Bernir had used this launcher a few times on the straw dummies in the backyard. He had riddled the ground with holes from the explosions but after a while, he got the hang of it. After some use, he had even gotten the basic cannoner skill. This skill slightly boosted a person's aim whenever they used cannon-type weapons. Apparently, the Armorsmith class was enough to allow him to get that skill.

"You'll also need this, remember to bury them discreetly."

Next came the mine scrolls. Agni would be away for the time being so there was no danger of the Ruby Wolf to set off the traps. After Roland was gone, Bernir was tasked to place these scrolls around the house and mostly close to where the fence was. The moment someone jumped over it they would set it off.

The fence would also be charged up with some electricity. This would just give everyone a little jolt to keep them from advancing forward. Roland was slightly afraid that some kids could decide to pay the strange craftsman a visit.

He didn't want to have any child deaths on his conscience. If they decided to jump over to the other side even after reading all the warning signs and after passing the electric fence, then it was on them. Lessening the strength of the mine scrolls would just endanger his assistant and his own home.

"Aye, what about these?"

Bernir took out something that looked like a deck of cards. These were the same mini scrolls that Roland used and now they were also given to Bernir.

"Use them if the runic launcher fails you, remember even if they are scrolls they still require some mana to activate."

Bernir nodded while placing the tiny scrolls in his pocket. The scrolls would be a last-ditch effort before an enemy got into close proximity. Roland even explained a few tactics that he used when he was still a runic mana scribe. The biggest downside here was that Bernir would not enhance these runic scrolls and would not be able to activate them as much as Roland could.

"It would be best to use one of the camouflage spells and then just run, don't try to be a hero."

Bernir rubbed his nose while Roland reminded him that this was only for protection. He feared that his assistant would try to defend this house to the bitter end. After getting beaten up by those adventurers he felt like Bernir now had a chip on his shoulder, one that wouldn't go away unless he defeated someone in some kind of fight.

"You can try using the escape tunnel if there is no other choice..."

Through the month the two had dug into the workshop, expanding it in the process. Roland had also implemented an escape tunnel that would lead them out into a forest area behind the house. There was not enough time to finish it in time so Bernir would need to either dig himself out or use an explosive scroll.

There were also other defensive items and also a detection device that could be used to check for enemies. This was something that Bernir was already aware of so there was no reason to double-check.

"Boss... I've been meaning to ask you..."

"Yes?"

Roland looked at Bernir that was trying not to avoid that piercing gaze.

"Ah, never mind... I'll ask you when you return. Be sure to come back in one piece, I can't run this workshop without you!"

"..."

Roland just nodded while also packing up some things. His suit of armor went through some modifications and he also scribed himself a nice batch of scrolls.

“Now help me put on my armor, I leave tomorrow but need to get that meeting over with. Also see if you can get Agni into his, without him biting through the leather...”

He wasn't the only one that would be using runic equipment anymore. His Ruby Wolf companion had also been given some upgrades. It covered the general weak points like the neck, underbelly, and the chest area while leaving the legs unprotected. Agni needed them to still keep his speed advantage.

This wolf armor was quite light and was made from a special metal that was lighter but less resistant than deep steel. Just like Roland's it came in a darker red color and had some mana stones poking out. With the Mystical monster trait, Agni was able to use more runic spells, just like before he was given a protective shield along with a boost to his speed.

“I'll try, boss, but no promises.”

After dressing up in his work suit Roland headed into the city. His destination being the adventurer's guild. On the inside, he was greeted by the usual smell of unwashed men and cheap booze. The elven lady pointed him in the right direction which was the meeting room of the scouting party that he would be a part of.

‘This is it?’

He looked at the piece of paper that he was given. This was proof that he was part of the expedition crew. There was also a side note which had the room number written on it. With this in mind, he straightened up and finally he knocked on the door. He was still not that comfortable with meeting new people so he steeled his resolve.

“Please come in, it's open.”

Roland was a bit early, he was someone that didn't like to make people wait for him. When there was an event he would always arrive at least fifteen minutes early. Quite a few people were the opposite though, which sometimes resulted in him having to wait for a prolonged span of time.

“Excuse me.”

He grabbed the handle and pushed the door open and discovered that there was only one person in this room.

“Dark red armor? Are you perhaps a member of the Rising Sun Knight Order?”

Inside he spotted an unfamiliar-looking woman. After the use of his identification skill, he could tell that just like him she was an adventurer at the tier 2 rank that was close to the 100th level.

She had a peculiar getup that reminded Roland of what nuns in his old world used to wear. She had it all, the black veil and under it a white form-fitting coif. The tunic was a mix of white and yellow colors, Roland couldn't see it from this side but on the back, there was a large drawing of the sun.

‘A member from the Church of Solaria?’

It was clear that this person was part of the religious cult that roamed this land. This being the gathering place for the party meant that she was probably the healer. Her face was hard to make out as she was also wearing a dark veil but she had one characteristic trait.

'Animal ears? A cat?'

He wasn't sure what type of beastman race she belonged to but her ears were pushing that religious headpiece out. It produced the shape of large pointy animal ears that could belong to various beastman races.

"Oh? Was I mistaken, I don't see the Rising Sun crest..."

Roland just entered and stood there for a moment as he analyzed the woman's stats. Thus it seemed like he was just spacing out. The woman on the other hand continued to speculate on his true identity. There were various knightly orders that worked for the church of solaria. He was not aware that they wore similar armors to him though. He had also switched to using a sun-like symbol for his wares, so this could have added to the confusion as well.

"I'm not part of the Church, I'm just an adventurer that was hired for this expedition."

The woman was still talking so he quickly answered in the hopes of ending the conversation early.

"Oh my, is that so? Would you like some tea while we wait for the others?"

He stepped forward while the woman was talking. From the way her voice sounded, he put her at an age above twenty but nothing too specific. Roland wanted to sit to the side and just wait but then the offer came. The nun had brought out a full tea set and the kettle was even giving off steam.

"Ah no, thank you..."

Roland wasn't one to socialize with others, talking to them with anything more than business in mind felt like a chore. Also due to nobles being involved in this new expedition, he decided to keep his helmet on. There was no way that he would risk being recognized by someone that knew his family.

"Are you sure? This Albrook honey is truly delicious with this black tea, you might regret it."

"Y-yes, I'm fine..."

After awkwardly walking to one of the chairs he finally sat down. This room looked similar to the one that he and Bernir had the hearing in. There were several tables with chairs at them with enough for most people to sit alone.

It was time to wait, the nun realized that Roland wasn't willing to join her so she didn't push it. Instead, she continued sipping some tea while humming a delicate tune.

"Is this the place?"

"Yeah, just go in..."

In time more people started to arrive though it was surprising that the very next two people were someone that he knew.

"Huh?"

"Ehh?"

First was a golden-haired girl with long ears that flinched back and almost fell over after noticing him sitting in the back. She was held in place by the person that was coming in after her.

“What’s wrong with you, Lobelia?”

Roland couldn’t see the person that was talking but he recognized that voice. The person to whom that voice belonged pushed this half-elf forward and revealed himself to be Armand.

‘What are those two doing here...’

It was hard not to notice them at this point. At first, Roland hoped that they might have walked into the wrong gathering room. Their actions didn’t reflect this fact as Armand just strutted in like he owned this place. Only after Lobelia indicated to where Roland was sitting with her head did his old opponent notice him.

“What are you doing here?”

“That’s what I would like to know...”

Armand and Roland glared at each other, though due to his helmet being still on this went unnoticed by the party of two.

“Calm down Armand.”

The half-elven girl started yanking on Armand’s arm as she knew well that this wouldn’t lead to anything good.

“How can I calm down if this bastard is in here...”

“Haha, he didn’t mean it...”

Roland’s started feeling bad not for Armand but for the girl that was with him. He also recalled the woman with the glasses that probably needed to put up with this idiot’s character.

“Did you forget what big sis told you, go and apologize!”

Lobelia delivered a swift kick to Armand’s shin but the man didn’t seem convinced. Before a big scene could happen a large green hand started pushing into Armand and another person walked in through the door.

“Why you make noise?”

This deep voice belonged to the half-orc that he had also seen on the day of the hearing. As Roland recalled his name was Korgak and he did make quick work of that band of thugs.

Soon the other party members started to arrive, it was time to start the strategic meeting and get ready for the lengthy expedition that would take a few weeks.

[Chapter 110 New Party.](#)

Roland was able to get a good seat in the back thanks to arriving early. Thanks to this he was able to examine everyone that would be taking part in this expedition.

The first person was the nun that arrived earlier than he did. Then there was the duo of Armand and Lobelia that he had the pleasure of meeting again. It didn't seem that this martial artist had any goodwill towards him. This was understandable as not much time had passed since his firing.

Then there were the members that he was less familiar with, like Korgak the Half-Orc. This warrior didn't talk much but seemed like he followed orders from people above him like the guild master that was also here this very moment. He was talking with the man who would be the party leader of this expedition.

This man seemed to have some kind of ranger class. He was wearing lighter armor that was covered by a dark green robe. He looked to be someone in his later thirties and was of the human race. He had a somewhat scruffy-looking beard that had some white patches here and there.

That was actually it, with him the party consisted of only six people. Armand and the Half-Orc were the warriors of the party while the half-elf and the team leader were probably the trackers and for monster detection.

The nun was clearly the healer but where they would place him remained to be seen. He had a wide array of runes that could be used from various ranges. People who looked from the outside might think that he was some kind of magic warrior with a wide range of skills, a jack of all trades type. In reality, he was very much focused on his crafting and mana capacity to utilize his runes.

"Okay, let us start this meeting."

Roland heard the guild master speaking out while also glaring in Armand's direction. The young pugilist was sulking after getting a smack on the head by a giant fist. Luckily one hit was enough to silence the room and now he and the party leader were discussing the plan.

"I think everyone knows the basics of this mission. You all will be heading into the dungeon to babysit some noble brats."

Armand was quick to recover as he and his half-elven friend chuckled at the words of the guild master.

"Your main job will be to escort the nobles into the volcanic area below the 10th level of the labyrinth. Afterward, you will remain as lookouts. You will keep an eye out for any abnormalities, only get involved if their lives are in danger."

There wasn't much new information. Just like he knew this was a test for the nobles and how they can take stressful situations. There would be one leader that needed to command the troops. They would need to clear out monsters while venturing into the deeper reaches of the dungeon.

All of these nobles were fresh tier 2 holders that would be mostly in their early fifties. Due to spending a lot of time at the noble academies, the noble youths lagged in terms of battle experience behind the common adventurers. They made it up with the levels of their skills and better classes that were planned out from the start.

For instance, the 'Knight' class was locked away to people of noble descent. A person needed a hidden trait of noble birth to be able to procure it. A commoner would only be allowed to get lesser classes like shield warrior or spear warrior instead. The Runesmith Lord class could also have been triggered by Roland's noble roots.

“Abnormalities? Like a tier 3 monster?”

He raised his hand and asked while some of the party members looked at him.

“I see that you catch on fast, Wayland was it? Let me answer that.”

Instead of the guild master, it was the team leader that spoke up.

“But first let me introduce myself, my name is Silvio and I will be the leader of this party.”

Everyone nodded at the introduction as the man continued to speak.

“Yes, If a tier 3 monster appears we are tasked to stall it while the nobles evacuate, even at the cost of our lives...”

“You serious?”

This time it was Armand that replied, he smacked his hand on the table that made it rattle around.

“Why should we risk our lives for some pompous nobles?”

“Why else, for the money!”

The man grinned while looking at Armand. Everyone here would be getting paid an extravagant amount of money. Roland knew this after a big chunk of what he needed for that manufacturing knowledge would be paid for through this single mission.

“You have all signed the contracts, you know what will happen if you abandon the mission.”

Before this meeting even started Roland was also called over to the guild during the recruitment drive. He needed to sign a document that would put him in a lot of trouble if he didn't prioritize the nobles. This was a serious mission that the guild couldn't afford to botch.

“If it's so important, why doesn't the guild send in more Platinum adventurers?”

This time around it was Lobelia that posed this question.

“There are several reasons but the most obvious one is that we don't just grow on trees.”

Silvio shrugged while shaking his head.

“The nobles also asked for adventurers that are only at the silver rank, do you need me to explain this?”

He asked while indicating that it was something obvious. Roland knew what the reason was but two certain party members still had question marks above their heads.

“It's the levels, they don't want to lose out on the experience.”

The team leader noticed this so after giving out a sigh he just gave out the information. Due to how this leveling system worked it was unfavorable to have high tier people around when farming for experience. They still allowed a tier 3 adventurer to come along just in case. If the adventurer party stayed far enough and didn't participate in the battles the nobles would not suffer any debuffs to their experience.

“Well not like it matters to me, as I see it, this is easy money.”

The older man grinned, it was clear that from his perspective the nobles were just throwing the money away. The dungeon had been mostly mapped out and there were no tier 3 monsters around. If only tier 2 monsters appeared it would probably be a low danger mission for this platinum rank adventurer.

The only real uncomfortable part would be living down in a heated dungeon for so long. Roland was already prepared for that situation but he had never field-tested his equipment for a prolonged time. This would be a good chance to gather some valuable data for his future creations.

Him being on this expedition had a lot to do with the dungeon's climate. The guild master did hire him probably with this in mind as he was the only person in this party that could use frost and cooling magic. This is also why when the question came up, he knew that he would need to do a little speech.

"That's all fine, but how do you expect us to last for weeks while surrounded by hot lava?"

Surprisingly it was Armand that posed this question, before answering the party leader looked towards Roland and then quickly turned over to the guild master.

"The guild master assured me that one of the party members here would take care of that. If I'm not mistaken it's the young man in the red armor?"

The people turned to him with surprised looks. They had seen him fight but he still acted more as a warrior type that just used some magical items to get ahead of the competition.

"Yeah, Little Wayland here will take care of that with one of his runic creations, mind explaining?"

The guild master called out to Roland who groaned inwardly. This would be the most uncomfortable part of the meeting but he had come prepared.

"Yes."

He nodded while standing up from his seat and walking over to where Silvio and the guild master were sitting. After arriving he was given some space, he saw the other four party members looking at him.

'Feels like I'm back at school...'

Roland never liked the presentations that the school system forced on them. He was never able to get good grades then as he was always stiff at presenting while a crowd of people looked at him.

After giving out a small sigh he took out a large piece of parchment. There was a board behind him to which he could place this parchment on. After using some tacks that he had Bernir make, he attached a diagram of some sort of tent on that wooden board.

"What's that, a tent? Won't that thing just burn up?"

Armand asked in a mocking tone as if this was something that Roland didn't know.

"Yes it's a tent, but it's a runic tent. It's made to resist the heat of the volcanic area."

Roland tried to ignore Armand while pointing to the outside material that the tent was composed of. The design was more modern as he took inspiration from regular camping tents. The roof part was slanted at an angle and was held up by a scaffolding made from hollow metal pipes.

“The tent leather that it’s composed of is made from Volcanic Salamander leather. It is resistant to the heat which will help insulate it.”

“Won’t we just be cooked inside?”

Armand asked a question again but then flinched as he noticed the guild master looking at him. Roland really hoped that this guy wouldn’t become a burden on the entire party as everyone’s lives depended on good cooperation.

“No, the air inside will be cooled and filtered, it will feel rather refreshing. This is not a regular tent, it has a runic structure in its scaffolding that will run on Elakian’s Fluid. We just need to bring enough to last us a month, I propose we take enough for two months to be on the safe side.”

“Elokin’s Fluid?”

The half-orc called out from the front with confusion as he clearly had no idea what Roland was talking about.

“People also call it mana fluid... just think of it as fuel for the magic.”

The mana fluid was named by its inventor. This fluid was similar to gasoline from his old world as it was fuel for magic items. It was quite easy to handle, you just needed to place this fluid in a container and connect it to the desired magic item with the correct runic structure.

It would then power it in a similar fashion as his wind turbines powered his entire workshop. This fluid came in two variants, one was natural and the other one was synthetic. It could be found in spots that were rich in mana or created by alchemists from mana stones.

If the mana was rich enough the fluid could even crystalize. It took on the shape of blue semi-transparent crystals that could be confused for mana stones. Roland also found this confusing as the mana fluid was somehow a refined form of those mana stones but it worked differently.

He wasn’t an alchemist so he would probably never go down that path, instead, he would need to improve on the generators he made. The best option seemed geothermal as he was on a volcanic island.

This mana fluid was a renewable source of energy all thanks to the dungeons. It was one more reason why it was forbidden from destroying the dungeon cores. There were far too many resources at stake here.

This fluid was the next best thing as Roland had no portable generator. It did cross his mind to make one, as it would only require steam to generate mechanical force and would work similarly to his steam engine.

The tent also possessed some supplementary runes and mana stones to lower the mana usage as much as the deep steel could handle. This tent design wasn’t something that he had entirely come up with by himself as some other craftsmen used similar products. He had been given the schematics by the guild master and he just updated it to fit his own vision.

During the report, he also explained how they would be using these tents. They would have two of them and two people would be sleeping in each one. Which would place the remaining outside as lookouts.

Luckily for Roland, he would be exempt from this duty as he was a special craftsman coming along. The ones keeping watch would be the two warriors and two scout types that were the team leader and Armand's half-elven friend. The cleric would also be exempt from this burden.

"Wayland here will also repair your equipment if it gets damaged..."

He was through with his presentation and finally returned to his seat. Finally, they switched to what everyone was tasked to do. He would need to as mentioned perform repairs and also keep the tents in working order.

Armand and Korgak were the front-line fighters as expected. The Nun from the sun church would remain in the middle of the formation as the only healer. He would stay behind her with Lobelia and would need to watch out for any sneak attacks.

Then Silvio would be the frontman, guiding everyone into the dungeon. He was clearly here to keep the Nobles safe. His class was tracking and detection related, which should keep the party safe from any unforeseen events.

The biggest downside to his class was that it wasn't geared for combat that much. The man's main weapon was still a bow with a dagger as a sidearm. He was still a tier 3 class holder so he remained the strongest person in this party.

"Well then, everyone knows Wayland and me now, how about the rest of you introduce yourselves?"

"Korgak is Korgak."

Was what Korgak said almost instantly when the question was given. The others just nodded while everyone started introducing themselves.

"I'm Lobelia, the prettiest maiden in this city!"

The half-elven girl was the next one. She stuck out her chest proudly while striking some kind of strange uncomfortable pose that made Roland worry about her spine.

"I haven't heard of a maiden that can drink an old dwarf under the table."

Was what Armand said after the presentation. He was given a quick hit to the shoulder right afterward. He was also the next one in line to introduce himself. Similar to his companion he struck a gallant pose with his chest out.

"I am Armand, the man that will become a legend here!"

"Pfff...legend he says... "

Lobelia burst out in laughter right after her 'big brother' made a fool of himself. Roland's face was covered but he wanted to just facepalm at these two idiots shouting at each other. The last person was the nun and probably the only one here besides the party leader that Roland was interested in.

"Praise the sun and the Goddess Solaria. I am Sister Kassia, I'll be sure to keep everyone alive through this journey. Would anyone like some tea?"

The woman smiled while holding out a kettle with the tea in it. Everyone besides one person in the room declined.

“Korgak wants!”

After a moment Roland was looking at two huge green fingers holding a tiny teacup. The half-orc quickly downed the warm brew and even asked for a refill.

“Okay..., everyone we will meet up at sunrise tomorrow morning. Get some sleep as you might not be able to afterward...”

Everyone parted their ways and headed out to prepare for the next day. Roland went straight home to check up on the tents that he would be required to conserve. He used the rest of the day to check and then to recheck every piece of equipment that he was taking with him.

Not everyone was like him, Korgak the Half-Orc headed straight to the pub to drink himself silly. Armand sneaked out into the pleasure district while Lobelia wasn't looking. Sister Kassia used this chance to speak the gospel inside of the adventurer's guild. The church didn't have the chance to position themselves well in this city quite yet. So the people were now reminded of how annoying these zealots actually were.

“Well Agni, it's time to head out.”

“Woof!”

“Bring back some souvenirs, boss!”

Roland chuckled a bit while parting with Bernir and his home. It was time to meet up with the new party of adventurers and see what kind of bratty nobles he would need to babysit. His armor had been polished and looked pristine, he was only missing a nice flowing cape to make him look like a Knight Lord.

“Okay, let's get this over with...”

He mumbled to himself as he approached the city, the red sun rays hitting his armor as the sun rose on the horizon.