

## Runesmith 121

### [Chapter 121 Rare and Shiny](#)

“Hm...”

Roland glanced at the inside of the strangely lit-up room. In it, he spotted a ruby variant of the volcanic salamander as well as some other monsters.

“How many enemies?”

Robert asked while getting ready for some monster slaying.

“There are six... I saw two of those Skolopendra crawlers around...”

Roland explained to his impromptu party. His detection device showed six monsters hiding in the open cavern. He took a peek outside to see the closest monster nearby. To his surprise, it was a rare variant of the volcanic salamander. The rest were creepy insect types that were even crawling on the ceiling.

“Sir Robert... can you be the vanguard?”

Roland asked while Robert nodded without even complaining. He feared that he would have a repeat of what happened during the bandit attack all those years ago. This wasn't the first noble lady and her knight that he was teaming up with. Robert didn't seem overprotective of Lady Lucille, it seemed that he had some trust in her magical abilities.

“I'll be right behind you then... and Lady Lucille give us some ranged support if you can.”

“Leave it to me, Sir Wayland!”

“Stay safe Lady Lucille, if something happens just run!”

Robert turned to the ice mage, the woman just nodded while also replying.

“Don't worry Sir Robert, I'll be fine, Sir Wayland's tamed beast will protect me.”

Agni moved his snout up high, it was as if he was saying 'Leave it up to me'. This Ruby Wolf was the weakest member of the party but he could at least stall some of the monsters. This could give Lucille precious time to finish an incantation and land a finishing blow.

The plan was to use ranged attacks, Robert was the only person who lacked those capabilities. He was tasked to keep the monsters from getting past him while Roland and Lucille pelted them with spells.

“Everyone ready?”

Lucille and Robert nodded at Roland's question and they entered the strangely lit cavern. It was of moderate size with about a hundred meters in length with fifty in width. The ceiling was quite high, over ten meters.

The layout was also quite peculiar as there were many glowing gemstones everywhere. Even before entering Roland and Lucille could feel the mana concentration spike. The light was coming from these crystals that hang down from the ceiling like stalactites.

There were small holes in the walls with enough size for the centipede and slug-like monsters to crawl from. Along with them, there was also one pool of lava in the middle, probably through which the ruby salamander came through.

“Mana, source of all power heed my call...”

The battle started with Lucille beginning her incantation. She was quite speedy with her words, much faster than Roland ever was when he was still training his magecraft. Even with that, Roland only needed to raise his magical rod to produce a burst of cold energy.

This was a spell called icicle rain. It created many small sharp icicles that would fly in a burst of cold air in a wide area. These creatures would all lose some of their bodily functions when exposed to freezing temperatures. The best way to do this was with an area of effect spell.

The open cavern had a small lava pool in the middle which would make this process more difficult. It was also closed off from most sides and the area was limited, which gave this strategy some validity.

Roland kept spraying cold air and icicles in all directions while Robert guarded him. Lady Lucille managed to finish her incantation, the spell she used sprayed cold energy along with snow in all directions.

“Cone of cold!”

The monsters that were here were a bit slow to react as the party of adventurers was not aiming at them directly. The red Skolopendra crawlers started wiggling around as they felt the shift in temperature. By instinct, they started to back away from the source of this cold energy.

Two slug-like creatures that were hanging on some of the stalactites started compressing into themselves while falling down. The Ruby Salamander reacted as well but instead of attacking it started retreating away towards the nearby lava pool.

“No, you don’t!”

Roland quickly reacted by sending an ice arrow towards the fleeing monster. It could not escape them, it was far too valuable and needed to be stopped before it could flee.

The ice arrow connected with the creature’s leg, it went right through those red gems while freezing the entire leg in place. Roland’s high intelligence stat, paired with his high-grade rune weapons was not something that a creature of this level could hope to resist.

The Ruby Salamander gave out a maddened shout while turning its head towards the person that injured it. It opened its mouth wide, soon a wide range flaming attack was produced and headed right towards its attacker.

This was the moment that Robert was waiting for. With his shield forward he jumped between Roland and the salamander’s flame breath. The runic shield that was given to him produced a blue light.

The blue light began glowing brighter before expanding outwardly into a frozen block of ice. This block of ice took the form of the kite shield with which the flame breath collided with. The runic shield kept radiating cold which successfully doused the flames without letting any heat past.

Roland used this chance to take aim once more, this time blasting the Ruby salamander with more freezing arrows. The monster's body was soon covered in icicles and it stopped moving altogether.

'Knowing magic sure is handy...'

He looked around the now frosted over cavern. The other insect monsters weren't looking so great after he and Lucille lowered the temperature in this room. He could even see Robert shivering from the cold.

The rest of the battle was quite uneventful as they went around and finished the paralyzed monsters off.

"Think that was all of them... let me check."

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Before pulling out his detection device he took some time to look around. It didn't seem that there were any more hidden enemies around now and that was soon confirmed with the help of his magical item.

Thanks to the pool of lava in the middle the ice began to quickly melt. Even with that, it would take some time, and thanks to this the party of three and a pup could cool down.

"What is this place?"

Lucille commented after stepping into the cavern. Robert was quick to come over in fear of any monsters popping up.

"The mana in here is strange... those crystals... are they?"

"Elokin's Crystals?"

Both Roland and Lucille could feel that large quantities of mana radiating from some of the glowing gems in this cavern. They seemed to be crystallized forms of the mana fluid used to power magical items. There were quite a few of them in this cavern and would probably be worth a lot of gold.

Roland leaned down to grasp one of these crystals. They looked like blue gems but were much softer. When applying too much force they would break easily and even turn to liquid when used as fuel after a while. From what Roland knew, the harder the crystal the more mana could be stored in it.

'I could probably stick one of these into a golem... wonder how long it would last...'

Golems just like any other magical item required a power source. This would be either something like Elokin's Fluid or a magician using their own mana. Roland was trying to develop his own batteries that would use his old world knowledge but this would work just as well.

This wasn't all there was to this cave, after some of the frost had melted he spotted some other strange-looking rocks. One of them was quite red and had some metallic luster to it.

"Could this be..."

He spoke out without noticing which brought the attention of his two noble companions. They saw him taking out his runsmithing hammer along with a chisel.

“Did you find something Sir. Wayland?”

Lucille asked but didn't get much of an answer as Roland was busy hammering a spot in the ground. After a moment they saw him pulling out some kind of reddish rock.

“What is that Sir. Wayland?”

“Oh... excuse me...”

Roland was finally able to snap out of his trance. He was somewhat shocked that he managed to find something like this here.

“If I'm not mistaken, this is Red Mithril...”

“Red Mithril?”

Lucille, who was interested in magical items and also runes was aware of the qualities of this ore. Robert on the other hand looked at the shiny rock, he was aware of the regular silver variant of this ore but had not heard of the red one.

“Yes, it has the same qualities to usual Mithril but due to absorbing fire elemental mana for many generations it is also fully fire-resistant.”

Roland explained while looking at the rock. There was more of it here, if he managed to fashion his entire armor out of this metal he would probably be able to even dive in the lava pools. The metal fully blocked any heat from going past it, it was also lighter than deep steel.

What some craftsmen did was to graft thinner sheets of this metal over other heavier alloys. Even a thin layer of this metal would be more resistant to cutting than a thick deep steel one.

It was done this way as mithril was quite rare and a thin armor made from it would still bend a lot. Thus it needed to be placed over something that would keep its form in place. Due to this quite a few craftsmen used the brigandine design to go with this fantasy metal. Then there were some other metals it could be mixed with to get a good result.

“Wait isn't that...”

A sound of a rock hitting the ground echoed through this cavern as Roland saw something in the distance. He quickly ran up to the wall with some more, there he saw a blue grayish ore that was next to one of the mana crystals. The two minerals were somewhat interacting with each other which brought it to his attention.

“This might be Etherium...”

“Etherium? The metal they use for making magic tower cores?”

Lucille was quick to follow after Roland, Robert did the same. While the two 'magicians' continued to talk about magical items he was busy keeping an eye out for monsters.

“The same... its magical absorbing properties are paramount... the runes on it will very rarely deteriorate...”

Even though this metal wasn't all that resistant and soft it was still something Runesmiths craved. It could be mixed with all the various minerals to produce the best runic or enchanted gear. With an Etherium alloy mixture, the runic structures even up to tier 3 would almost never deteriorate.

Roland took out his hammer and chisel and started to hit the walls like a madman. His rush to get the metal was halted by a hand that belonged to Robert.

“Huh?”

“You are making too much noise, what if the monsters hear us?”

He was snapped back to reality by his older brother. The sight of a precious metal that could help him create superior weapons and armor made him forget about the situation they were in. Even though this was a treasure trove filled with precious metals and magic crystals, they were useless to him if he couldn't use them.

“Ahh..., I'm sorry...”

Roland placed the hammer and chisel back into his spatial bag before stepping away from the rocky wall. There were other various metals that he couldn't identify just yet but they would need to wait. First, they needed to get out of here, if there was no way connecting to the rest of the dungeon then he would not be able to use these ores anyway.

“Right... we should see if we have really cleared this chamber. Let us stay close together, try not to touch any strange things, we are still in a dungeon, there could be traps. Agni, go check.”

Roland called Agni over that at this point had gained some detection skills. With them, he could at least point them to any regular traps and even magical ones as he did possess the mana sense skill.

The group started to slowly move around the cave once more, this time looking at the walls more thoroughly.

“I was sure that there was a passage somewhere...”

Roland remembered seeing a larger tunnel leading out of this section of the cavern when looking at his detection device. It was able to show a small minimap-like area in holographic form.

After coming in here he couldn't see any paths leading out. There were some smaller holes in the walls of the ceiling but not large enough for them to crawl through.

Some of those bug-like monsters must have gotten in through those while the salamander swam in through the pool. No one of them could swim out through this lava to see where it came out, not even Agni that had the highest fire-resistance here.

After going around a few times they didn't find anything out of the ordinary. There were no traps or any more monsters here. The cavern was still filled with magic crystals and rare metals that were waiting to be mined. This was something that he was very much interested in but first, he needed to survive.

Roland took out his orb and injected some of the mana into it. The holographic map showed up but it was flickering on and off as if there was something interfering with it.

“Strange...”

During the flickering, he saw something that looked like a path but that spot was blocked by a wall.

“Did you find something, Sir Wayland?”

Lucille commented while Robert also chimed in.

“I don’t see anything here...”

Roland looked at this wall as he moved closer. He remembered that there were many paths that he could open thanks to his debugging skill thus he activated it.

‘Jackpot.’

He saw a familiar runic structure like in all the other secret rooms that he discovered. Thus he leaned up and injected some of his mana into this structure to make it move.

“Huh?”

Robert jumped back with the shield raised as he heard the wall rumbling. Soon a small opening appeared just large enough for someone of Roland’s size to go through it. After removing his hand the opening closed up once more and he took a step back.

“Sir Wayland?”

“This is a dungeon, there are similar hidden paths scattered around. Luckily I know the way of opening them...”

He didn’t really want to disclose that they were based on runes. If word got out other runesmiths might be commissioned to open these hidden treasure troves. This one for instance he would like to keep for himself. The metal ores would be a big help for his future creations.

“Oh? How did you do it? Are there runes involved?”

“Uh... I think we should do something about our food shortage...”

It seemed that the girl was fast on the uptake so he tried to shift the conversation in another direction. He turned around and started walking towards the dead monster.

“The Salamander?”

Robert asked while looking at the partially frozen monster.

“Yes, its meat is edible, we can roast it at the lava pool.”

His party had already tried eating the volcanic salamander variant. This one would not taste much different, they just needed to remove the outer shell to get to the juicy meat inside.

“You expect the Lady to eat monster meat? Are you mad?”

Robert looked at the killed Ruby Salamander that was in the process of being sniffed by Agni. The Lady in question looked at the dead monster and backed away while holding her hand over her mouth. It seemed that neither of his two new companions were too keen on eating this dead salamander.

“Do you have any better ideas? My rations won’t last us more than a few days and we could be stuck here for weeks.”

Without waiting for a reply, Roland moved over to the partially frozen monster. He was not a specialist at cooking or dismembering monsters for parts. Bernir mostly took care of that part but he had seen him and others do it. It would be a bit troublesome but he knew how to prepare the meat.

“If Sir Wayland thinks so, maybe we should consider it...”

“But what if you get sick, what if that meat is poisonous?”

Robert replied while looking at Roland that was now busy cutting up the monster carcass. While listening to the conversation he turned to his older brother.

“Didn’t you learn about this at your knight school? Monster meat is edible, unless it’s a poisonous type it’s mostly safe.”

It didn’t seem like these noble types were taught any real-life survival skills for these types of situations. The lady here was stuck with her nose deep in books while the knight was mostly interested in swinging his sword. It seemed that they only focused on the things that their classes were good at and weren’t interested in much beyond that.

“I’ll try it first if you are afraid... we need to take the meat with us, this will be a good place to take a break before we move. There is only one way out and it’s blocked.”

There were two passages leading into this cavern. One through they came in and the other the one locked behind a runic lock. There were still the smaller openings through which the monsters could crawl in and the lava pool. He and Robert would need to keep watch while the Lady rested, she looked quite tired, her vitality being drained during the walk and fight...

### [Chapter 122 Second home invasion.](#)

“Hm...”

The sounds of hammering metal were heard in the dim-lit room. Each time the hammer descended on the heated steel plate it produced more sparks that brightened this workshop.

Bernir was at it again, this time around he had moved up to the upper body part. He used his tongs to place the piece of metal into the runic forge. Thanks to the whole thing being run on electricity he didn’t need to worry about blowing any wind into this forge with the bellows.

Instead, there was a little crank on the side that when wound up in the right direction would make the forge produce heat. He had no idea how this tool really worked as his boss was quite cryptic about it. It didn’t matter as the important part was that it made crafting items a lot easier.

He continued striking the metal frequently and consistently until he got it in a somewhat rounder shape. He was aiming to craft the cuirass portion today, at least the front side before the day ended.

The whole process was sped up thanks to some of the machines that Roland had left behind. Before he needed to mold everything into shape with his hammer but now things like drilling holes, quick sharpening, or even cutting were possible.

It was now quite easy for him to create the desired shape from the diagram. Then drill some holes through which he could rivet the parts to each other. The most bothersome parts were still the areas for the mana stones. These grooves needed to fit the mana stones just right, otherwise, they could either fall out or be crushed during combat.

After most of the day had passed Bernir was left with a deep steel armor part. It was the breastplate this time around, what was left was giving it a nice shining before attempting the creation of the rear plate. When both parts were connected they would form the full deep steel cuirass.

“Good... intermediate grade...”

Bernir used the identifying monacle on the piece of armor before putting it to the side. With this, he would have the lower portion along with the chest almost done. Then came the arms, shoulders and the last would be the helmet.

He didn't bother with putting any intricate designs on this armor. After it was put through Runecrafting it would already be quite stylish. With the addition of mana crystals, it would look even better, this would also add to the all-around cost.

“I hope the boss will like it...”

Bernir yawned out while putting the piece of armor on an armor rack. Together with all the other pieces, he had made it was looking fine.

“Was it supposed to be three weeks? Or four...”

Bernir had been busy working but that didn't mean that he liked living here alone. Without his boss's frowny face it didn't seem right. He hoped that he would return soon, he was very much interested in all the runic contraptions that he made and how he could aid in their creations.

For him a proper dwarven craftsman it was quite an honor to work on the costly magical equipment. His boss also had a knack for it, he was able to come up with various items that always blew Bernir away.

He was looking at one of them just now. It had a spherical shape and was up on a thin stand. On the stand was a little indent for his thumb. When he injected some of his mana a bright green illusion would appear. It depicted the whole workshop and he could even see the tunnels around it.

“This never gets old... let me see...”

Bernir had lived mostly a mundane life thus a magical item like this was quite a novelty. His boss even told him to use it often as it detected if there were any people or monsters nearby.

After a minute of glancing at this light show, he removed his thumb. It was time to go up, get cleaned, and have one last drink before going to bed. At least that was the plan but before he could go out he heard a whistling sound.

“What the?”



It was followed by a red light going up in the corner of the workshop. This was something that his boss had warned him about. He quickly moved back to the detection device and turned it back on.

The red light and whistling meant that something was amiss. This was an alarm feature and would only activate if someone was close to the property. Blue dots, there were four of them and they were all close to each other.

Roland had given him an explanation about the various colors. Red would be monsters, green would be regular animals and then there was blue, people from the many races.

“They are close by... maybe an adventurer party just looking around?”

This workshop was close to the city and between the dungeon. From time to time adventurers did come through here, some of them even hunted the animals in the forest as well as the lesser monsters.

“But why would they still be here at this hour...”

It was quite late, close to midnight. Everything had gone dark and there was no light outside. The city was bright from the outside so it was easy to spot but this house was not. He was sure to put out any lights when going down into the workshop so as to not waste any electricity that could go into the runic tools.

He started to sweat, memories of the party of thugs that ambushed him in the forest started coming back to him. The moment of weakness passed soon as he managed to snap back to reality.

“No... this time it won't be the same...”

Bernir looked to the wall, on it a somewhat strange-looking tube with a large gun chamber attached to it. To the side, there was also a vest with pockets, in them quite the assortment of various colored spheres.

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After recovering his gaze moved back to the lit-up hologram. The four blue dots were still in one place, before acting he needed to make sure that they were actually enemies and not some passersby.

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“Is everyone ready?”

One of the hooded men called out, all of them were here for one thing and that was to get rich. They knew that the problematic owner of this house had left on a dungeon expedition. It would take at least another week for him to return which would give them enough time to skip town.

“Yes!”

The other three thieves nodded while the boss looked to the large wall. This house was a bit strange, the bottom part was hardwood but there was a metallic fence with barbed wire above it.

“Remember, it's only one blacksmith, he should not pose a threat, kill him on sight.”

The group had been looking at this area for a whole week and came prepared with a plan. They knew about the only resident inside and were aware that he would pose no threat to them. All of them were tier 2 rogues with their boss being at the highest level.

“Let’s go!”

They all nodded at each other and silently moved towards the fenced of home. They moved in from the back going altogether. There was something strange about this fence, thus they knew that it would be best to evade it.

One of the hooded men stopped and moved his hands together. With his help, the other three were able to easily vault over this barbed wire without even touching it once. The fourth on the other hand had to take on a running start to barely jump off the fence. He almost touched one of those metallic barbs and felt a strange sensation wash over his body as he was passing by.

“Wait...we need to be careful...”

The group knew that there was something strange with this whole house. One of the thieves that was versed in traps crouched down while activating his skill. From the outside they could not tell that there were any traps but when being so close by it was easy to notice.

“The ground has been dug up...”

He did not know what was buried there but he knew that there was something. There were various possibilities here, traps came in various shapes and sizes. This being a runsmiths home they speculated that they were magical in nature. Instead of trying to disarm them, it was better to just evade setting them off.

“Use that item to be sure...”

One of the men took out something that looked like a pocket watch. After injecting some of his mana into it the item reacted. It sent out a dim blue light that when making contact with the ‘traps’ illuminated them in red color.

“It’s working...Let us continue...”

They used this item to show them the way. There were quite a large amount of these traps. The sheer number made them think that there was something good waiting for them inside of that home. No one would bother to place so many if there were no treasures inside to plunder.

It seemed like they would make it, they were already halfway into the backyard before something happened.

Suddenly the boss of the thieves heard a strange noise, he glanced up and thanks to his night vision skill he could see some kind of small orb. This was his first mistake, this orb suddenly burst into a bright light blinding him along with his party of three.

“W-what?”

The whole place was illuminated by this golf ball-sized orb. Thanks to it the group of four was clearly visible even during this pitch dark night.

“There you are...”

They heard a voice coming, instead of from the main house it seemed to be coming from a different location, this being the log cabin to the side. They all turned to see who it was, being still blinded they could vaguely see a blurry person. This person was holding something in his hand that looked like a tube with a handle on it.

“Take this!”

A sound of pressurized air was heard as something was launched towards the group of stunned thieves. The boss even when in distress kept his cool. He knew that there were still traps all over this place so he quickly backtracked through the path that he had already taken.

This left his party members open to the incoming attack. They saw another sphere traveling towards them but before they could react it collided with the ground next to them.

Instantly it turned into a large ball of flames. The closest person to it was thrown to the side, his dark robe catching on fire. This wasn't quite over as when he tumbled he collided with one of the many traps on the ground. This produced another large explosion that caused him to instantly die on the spot.

“You think you can come here and rob us?”

The voice of an angry half-dwarf echoed through the area and was followed by many explosions. Due to the chaotic nature of his attack, the thieves had a hard time reacting.

“N-nooo.... agh....”

Even without the glowing orb of light above them the whole place was well lit up by the explosions. The thief boss was the only one fast enough to evade the initial bombardment and was also able to recover from the blinding effect.

What he saw was his maimed party members. One looked dead while the other had his legs blown off, the third one was curled up while missing an arm. It was clear that this was a bad idea but he was still alive. He looked in the direction of the man that caused this, a slightly larger dwarf that lived here.

The thief boss could see him pointing a strange rod at him. It flung something his way that was round in shape. He was ready this time around and reacted accordingly. Having superior agility he quickly stepped to the side while also being careful of where he stepped in.

This flung sphere collided somewhere close to where he used to stand. Instead of exploding into a ball of fire as he expected it sprayed some kind of liquid all over the place. The pressure was so high that it got onto his own clothes. His party members were unable to react at all as they were quite immobilized.

“Wait, is this...”

He quickly removed his robe and threw it to the side before hearing another orb being fired off. The moment it collided with the ground it produced a fireball. This ball of fire when coming in contact with the liquid lit it up even more.

The three-party members that were already injured started burning up as everything went up in flames. The liquid was flammable oil that when coming in contact with the flames continued to burn everything in a set radius.

The thief boss looked into the distance, he could see the man that killed his men standing there. There wasn't much distance between the two but he was unsure of that weapon he was holding. It decimated his party of tier 2 rogues in a matter of moments.

Then an opportunity arose, he could see the half-dwarf opening this strange weapon up, in his hands some orbs that were previously flung at him and his party. It looked that this was some kind of archer-like weapon and he needed to reload.

The old thief boss made a decision, he charged towards his opponent. He could see him fumbling around during reloading. The old thief was unwilling to leave without getting something in return. He lost all his men and would need to find a new party but that would require funds. These he could receive by killing this half-dwarf and selling that weapon that he had.

During the initial blast, quite a bit of the traps had been activated. He now had a path towards his enemy. In both of his hands, he was holding sharp daggers. The half-dwarf managed to insert the ammunition in, his hand went to the crank on the side but before he could use it the thief boss threw one of his daggers.

"Ahh..."

The thrown dagger embedded itself in Bernir's shoulder and brought him tumbling down to the ground. The thief grinned as he saw his enemy lose his weapon. He had aimed for the arm that was holding the weapon in place and was successful. Now, what remained was to get closer and go for the throat.

He could see the half-dwarf going for something on his vest and he judged it to be some sidearm. Nothing that he couldn't handle so he prepared for it as he jumped in for the kill. His sharp knife went towards Bernir's uninjured hand while he on the other handheld an item out.

"Huh?"

The thief expected it to be some kind of bladed weapon, like a dagger or knife. Instead, he saw a small card-sized parchment with some strange runic symbols on it. It was now too late, the tip of his dagger collided with the runic writing but the item was already activated.

"ARghhhh..."

A flash of electricity erupted from this small card causing the thief to stop. The man could feel a massive amount of lightning energy going through his body as he was affected by the spell. His skin started melting as he was flung back.

"Y-you b-bastard..."

He was still alive but his body was numb. This was due to being hit directly by a tier 2 electric spell that came out of that small runic card.

"I'm going to kill you... then I'll kill your family..."

The man started shouting at Bernir while not being able to get off the ground. He knew what was about to happen, rage took him over as he still couldn't believe that he was done in by a blacksmith.

"Go to hell!"

Bernir fired off one last grenade towards the remaining assailant. It caused another explosion that made quick work of this thief.

"Hah..."

The victor was now clear. The four home invaders were left devastated in the yard. Their body parts were scattered in various places and some were even burning up. Bernir could barely stand up while having a dagger stuck in his shoulder.

"This is going to take a while to clean up..."

He chuckled to himself weakly while also looking at the dead bodies. He started to become nauseous, the body parts were everywhere and this was the first time that he killed a person himself. Before barfing all over the place he quickly turned around.

"I need to get a health potion..."

Bernir waddled over to the log cabin while trying not to pass out. This dagger had lowered his health pool by a third and he was losing more due to the bleeding status. The attack was over but he needed medical aid after which he would need to douse the fire and take care of the bodies.

The night was not quite over but he had been victorious. He didn't come out unscathed but he managed to protect his new home.

"I did it boss...ugh... this hurts... how do those adventurer types do this..."

He mumbled while disappearing into the cabin, before pulling out the dagger he needed to make sure that he had some healing potions to douse on this deep wound.