

Runesmith 131

[Chapter 131 Going to the bank.](#)

Roland in his mismatched armor stood there, before him was a smiling Lucille and a somewhat awkward-looking Robert. He was wearing a new knight half-plate armor that must have been a spare. Robert just like Roland had lost his previous armor during the dungeon expedition.

“Good day Mr. Wayland!”

“Ah, good morning...”

He was wearing a different suit of armor but the parts covering both his arms were clearly runic in nature. Through this, it was quite easy to tell him apart from regular warriors and knights that did not have enough mana to use gear like this.

“It’s surprising how fate works, I was just looking for Sir. Wayland and he is here! Don’t you think, Sir. Robert?”

“Yes, M’lady.”

Robert just nodded, Roland expected him to tip a fedora that would fit that reply. He was still acting very gentlemanly when around this young woman.

“Can I help you with something?”

Roland was still a bit apprehensive about being around his older brother. It was luck that kept his face hidden away for so long but now he was slowly running out of excuses to wear body-covering armor.

“Yes you can! You didn’t think that we would forget about what you did for us down there!”

“That’s right.”

Robert nodded while keeping his arms crossed over and against his wide chest. Today the two were in lighter clothes.

Lucille was wearing a full-blown dress that went all the way up to her ankles. She was even holding a parasol over her shoulder to keep the sun rays from hitting her pale face. Robert on the other hand had a blue tunic under that half-plate armor that made him look like some kind of beefy prince. His look was finished off with a longsword strapped to his hip.

The two actually looked good together, Robert was quite the handsome man with somewhat different facial features than Roland but some parts were quite similar. It was clear that their father’s DNA was running in their veins and if he took off the helmet it would become even more apparent.

“It’s fine, you already thanked me when we were in the dungeon...”

Roland did remember that he was promised a reward but he didn’t care about it that much anymore. The access to that treasure trove was enough for him, he didn’t want to be too greedy.

His plan was to wait a year or two before going down there to face that boss. Maybe longer depending on how much time he would need to make a golem.

That was the thing that he was missing during that fight, something or someone that could tank the hits from that monster. Even at this time, he would probably have enough firepower to pierce that monster's skin. The only problem would be to keep it in place to deliver a critical blow. For that a tough golem made from fire-resistant metal and that could tie down a large creature like that was needed.

"I must insist, my father always told me to keep my promises! It would be shameful to the De Vere name if I didn't!"

"The lady is right, we at the Arden Estate have the same rule!"

'Did we have something like that?'

Roland asked himself as he didn't really recall things like that being mentioned. This could be due to the fact that he was mostly ignored by his father and the other servants. No one really treated him like a proper noble and he himself was not interested in it.

He spent most of his days training his basic skills and planning his escape after attending the young mage academy. That of course fell through when he discovered his lack of elemental proficiencies. Even to this day, he did not even have a fraction of a percentage in any of them.

"It's really fine, the guild gave me a nice bonus for my troubles, and didn't Lady Lucille lose her purse while in the dungeon?"

Roland was sure that all of the girl's belongings went missing during the dungeon run. Even if she wanted to give him the money she shouldn't be able to. This is unless she asked for some pocket change from one of the other nobles.

"That is true, but Albrook does have a bank!"

"A bank?"

Roland thought for a second, he recalled hearing something like that being opened a month or two ago. In this kingdom, there was one main bank called the 'National Bank of Caldris' NBC for short.

He never really used it as the price of admission was quite steep and also because most of his gold was in circulation. Roland constantly bought new metals and resources. Everything that he earned from selling runic gear was invested into his workshop almost instantly. There was no reason for him to make a bank account.

That wasn't the main reason why he never used one, it always came down to his true identity. These banks had costly identification devices, the item that was enough to fool the guilds lower quality analyzing item would not work in the bank.

While the adventurer's guild didn't care that much about the true identities and criminal history of their adventurers, the bank did. Roland would need to subject himself to their scanning devices and they would probably see his true name on it.

If this information would find its way to his enemies was up to debate. Supposedly the banks were very hush-hush. This didn't mean that his father would not get this information. He was probably safe from the cult with that as they did not know his real name or association with the Arden estate.

“Yes, luckily I still have my bank card!”

Lucille proclaimed while holding out a dark-colored card with some strange inscriptions on it. Roland’s eyes shone for a fraction of a second as he noticed that there were many tiny runes on it but he also noticed something else that was a first.

‘It’s a runic item... but I can’t debug it?’

Lucille was presenting the card right in front of his face as she stood there proudly. This allowed him to see everything quite well. Even then, when he strained his senses his debugging skill did not show him the correct paths.

It was clear that this was a runic item but the runes were beyond small. If it wasn’t for some larger ones sticking out he would have a hard time telling that it was an actual runic item.

This could mean two things, either this was not a true runic item and thus his skill didn’t work. The other possibility that he was more inclined to believe was that this item was above his skill’s level.

“That’ card, what is it ...”

“Ah, this? Did Sir. Wayland never see an obsidian bank card?”

Lucille couldn’t tell but Roland was squinting with his eyes while trying to scan this item with his debugging skill. If he focused a lot of mana into his eyes he could see a hazy image of the schematic. It was not complete and faded almost instantly even before he could make out anything insightful.

“Lady Lucile, that’s a bit...”

Robert turned to the blue-haired girl with an awkward expression.

“Huh?... oh I didn’t mean it like that Sir. Wayland!”

Roland snapped back after burning through 30% of his mana while trying to analyze this black card. From the conversation, it seemed as if Lucille implied that he was not wealthy enough to get one of these cards or even worse to visit a bank.

“I’m sure the bank would accept Sir. Wayland as a client!”

Besides the strenuous identification requirement, the bank always did a thorough background check. They sometimes even utilized magicians that could see into a person’s past to see if they weren’t someone in disguise.

This of course only left people like nobles and merchants using the banking system. There was a consensus that only after getting a proper bank card could a merchant see themselves as being wealthy.

It was far easier to get a card like that if someone was part of a noble household. The background checks were also a lot more lenient.

“Ah... no that’s fine, I have no use for a card like that.”

Roland replied while Lucille started flailing her arms around. It seemed that the girl had not yet been pushed through the wringer of the noble life. She seemed overly nice even to someone like him that would be considered a somewhat rare commoner but still only a commoner.

“What Lady Lucille would like to propose is that you come with us to the bank.”

“To the bank?”

“Ah, yes. I might have lost my purse but I left this card at the mayor’s house!”

Lucille quickly recovered while blushing a bit. It seemed that she did not take all of her possessions down into the dungeon. The card that she was holding would not be useful to anyone besides her as well, so it was even okay to lose it.

‘I will need to buy more materials for this runic forge...’

Even though Roland did not wish to go with these two, he was in dire need of more funds. Even with the bonus, he received from the guild he still didn’t have enough. There were far too many projects that he wanted to sink his time in but not enough gold to go around.

Without the reward that he was promised from these two, he would probably need to spend months crafting runic items to sell before being able to invest his time in more important things, like his golem project.

“Also please take this Sir. Wayland!”

“What is this?”

He asked as Lucille handed him a rolled-up scroll. At first, he thought it was some kind of spell scroll but the lady said otherwise.

“Those are the synchronization coordinates to my own magic crystal, with this we will be able to exchange runic theories even when I leave here!”

In short, Lucille was giving Roland her phone number. Every mage had their own special crystal ball that they were attuned with. On the scroll, there was an encoded magical number that Roland could use. He was a tier 1 mage so he would be able to use any kind of crystal ball meant for communication with ease.

“Runic theories?”

“Yes, maybe I could even introduce you to the Professor!”

“Professor? Wait, you want me to call you when you leave?”

“Um... can’t I?”

Lucille pouted slightly after Roland posed the question. Robert raised his brow a little bit as it looked that the Runesmith wasn’t interested in staying in contact. In reality, this was a very favorable connection that Roland could grow.

Most people would fight to have good relations with a promising tier 2 mage. There were various lucrative opportunities waiting for him. He might even be able to get connections to the magic academy that probably had a whole section of runic scriptures.

The only problem here was her relations with Robert. Even he could tell that the two had a somewhat deeper bond after venturing into the dungeon. Their future would be a rocky one as Robert did not have the status to go with his noble title.

Being only the third son and coming from a commoner merchant side, he didn't have much leverage. The only realistic shot he had was if he gained a lot of military merit as his father before him.

"Do you have access to more runic knowledge...?"

He asked as it did pique his interest. Even when he stayed in contact with Lucille this didn't mean that Robert would be shadowing her every move. They both went to different academies and also lived in different cities. It wouldn't be strange if the two only had a relationship through letters and magic calls.

"Yes! We also have a knowledgeable runic mage at our institute, I'm sure the Professor will love your take on crafting runes."

Apparently, this professor was a runic mage, some proper insight from a mage's perspective to help him with his research could hasten his progress by many years. This didn't seem like such a bad deal, mostly because he didn't have to do anything for it. There were no contracts and dangerous expeditions to the dungeon this time around, it looked to be safe.

"Mmm... I'll think about it..."

Roland nodded while putting the scroll into his spatial bag. This would also be a good moment to get himself a communication crystal.

"Wonderful! Let us depart to the bank Sir. Wayland."

After thinking it through there was no real reason for him to refuse more money. He would not be the one using the bank card and they would not be identifying him. This was also a good chance to see how the inside of such a bank looked like.

They started walking, Lucille was quite the chatterbox as always while Robert just nodded his head and agreed with whatever she was saying. Surprisingly the theme this time was not runes but remembering the times down in the dungeon.

As always, Roland wasn't one to talk. He was more interested in the obsidian bank card that he could not use his debugging skill on. Even against the dark cult, he was able to see the runes in that device that trapped him in an illusion.

When thinking back to that time he was inexperienced but now he could somewhat measure its worth. It was an item at the greater grade which would put it along with tier 3 classes. This meant that this card was above it, either an even higher greater item or one at the grand level.

From what he knew, these bank cards were given to the nobles with a set sum encoded in them. The person that commissioned this card would deposit a large sum of gold into the bank. The bank would then take a slight cut from it and give the person this card.

At other banks, these cards could be read and the client could take out cash. It was quite similar to debit cards from his old world, with the difference that there was no internet to keep track of the exchanges.

After a use, the card would have the funds deducted from it at the bank but there was no bank account that others could deposit their money to. It was just a way to safely keep money while traveling, no one could use the cards and a person could always return to the bank that the card was created at.

There they could recover their money if something ever happened to their card. This process could take months though, as someone needed to check with all the banks in the kingdom to see if the card was ever used and if the client wasn't a liar. Only after that would a new card be created with a new fee added to it.

It was still safer to have it than to walk around with a large purse filled with gold coins. The cards could be hidden away in various ways which also added to the safety.

"We are here!"

They stood before a large bank building. This building was pure white and made from sturdy stone. There were columns at the front of the large opening which made this structure somewhat reminiscent of old Greek architecture. It also made it stick out like a sore thumb around the more medieval-looking buildings.

In front of it there stood four guards, even without identifying them he could tell that they were quite skilled. As the group approached the guards moved to close the path but as the card was shown they moved to the side.

"Follow me!"

Lucille was quite cheerful for some reason as they entered. On the inside, he spotted a shiny marble floor. On the sides instead of torches, there were some light crystals that were shining even now.

The first thing he noticed were the large columns creating a path forward. Then on the sides, there was something that he was familiar with, iron golems. There were four of them in total and this was probably the main line of defense that this bank was offering.

While Lucille and Robert moved forward he slowed down to look at these runic devices. This time around his debugging skill worked just fine and he could see all the external runic traces and large runes.

'They are similar but of better quality than of the worker golems I've seen before...'

"I welcome you to the official Albrook bank, I apologize for our lack of staff but we are still in the process of building."

They were met with a nicely dressed elven man. He was wearing a dark tailored suit that made him somewhat look like a high-class butler.

"Good day, I would like to withdraw some coin."

Lucille bowed politely while Robert nodded at the man as well. It seemed it was time to get his second payday, with so much cash in his possession he could really start expanding his workshop.

[Chapter 132 Out shopping.](#)

Roland glanced at his pouch that contained multiple golden coins. He even started looking over his shoulder, wondering if someone from the thieves guild would mark him after he came out of the bank with both Robert and Lucille.

Luckily he did not see any shadowy figures looming in the dark. The guards that were standing around the bank made sure to remove any suspicious elements from the premises. This building was also in the innermost reaches of the city.

To get in, a person needed to get past another gate that was surrounded by a large wall. This was recently created and most of the rich merchants lived in this section of the city. This of course pushed any poor citizens that previously lived here out into the slums that as always were kept hidden away from the main roads.

“Well then, I’ll excuse myself... you two take care...”

Roland said while nodding slightly. With the money in his possession now he could go prepare a list of materials that he needed. He didn’t even have time to look through the new crafting schematics that he received from the guild master.

There was also the problem with Robert being here, for now, he was successful in keeping his identity hidden but this could change. It didn’t seem that Robert was suspecting anything, this was mostly thanks to Lucille being here. It was clear that he was lovestruck and had a pile of roses inside his brain keeping him occupied.

“Wait Sir. Wayland!”

“Um... was there something else you needed?”

Roland asked while stepping down into the road.

“Yes, we have a request but it isn’t from me...”

Lucille looked to the side of the knight that was accompanying her. Roland turned his head towards his brother that instantly evaded his gaze.

‘Why is he acting all shy all of a sudden...’

The suspicious behavior was quickly explained by Robert’s next words.

“Yes, I have a request. Could you create a runic shield like the one you lent me in the dungeon? I will of course cover all the cost of manufacturing it!”

He said while pulling out a sack filled with some coins.

“You want me to make you a shield?”

“Yes, we will be staying here for another six days... is that not enough time to make one?”

Robert asked while his brows were furrowed. The shield that he lent to Robert had mostly turned into scrap metal after they left the hidden dungeon part. He was given it back later but the only thing he could do with it was to melt it down to get the deep steel back.

Six days were actually enough to create a shield from scratch. He just needed a thick enough slab of metal that he could cut into the shape of the shield then shape it further with his hammer. Attaching the handle and some mana stones was probably the more strenuous process as it required more control.

Then only the runesmithing would be left, this he could probably knock out in a day or two with his current skill levels. With his high mana reserves, he would probably be able to power through it without needing that many breaks. This also depended on the complexity of the runes as some of the lesser runes he could fashion in a couple of hours.

“Six days might be a bit...”

He lied, as he tried to refuse the offer. Even if he could do it, he still wanted to minimize the interactions with his brother. It was a half-lie, taking into consideration that he wanted to do some other projects first, making a shield was not something on his radar.

“It would be difficult... is that so... that’s a shame.”

Robert didn’t seem to even argue about it as he accepted the refusal but before Roland could escape this predicament an overzealous ice mage spoke up.

“How about we just buy a good shield at the store and Sir. Wayland just adds his runes to it? That should save a lot of time!”

“Uh well...”

Roland twitched slightly as he couldn’t deny that fact.

“Would that be possible?”

Robert’s eyes lit up in anticipation as he looked at Lucille.

“Yes, most runesmiths only focus on creating runes. There is no need for Sir. Wayland to craft the whole shield, with his skills he shouldn’t need more than a few days to finish, isn’t that right Sir. Wayland?”

Lucille looked at Roland with a big smile as if she gave him great advice. She looked like a puppy that wanted to be petted but he wanted to punt her instead.

“I guess you are right...”

Not wanting to seem like a total asshole he just agreed. He was still talking to a noble lady with high status. She was his ticket into the magic academy and more runic knowledge, it would be unwise to alienate her. She might seem all friendly now but after she left that could change.

“That’s great, do you know any good shops Sir. Wayland?”

Lucille asked while Roland just thought about his next move and how to minimize his interactions with Robert.

“Good shops? I mostly send my assistant to buy resources and I also craft my own weapons...”

He did visit some of the blacksmithing shops just to see how the city was structured. This he did to see if he could ‘borrow’ any new runic designs.

“But there are a few large weapon and armor shops here, I’m not sure which one would be the best, we will need a deep steel shield at least...”

Roland turned to Robert and started asking questions.

“What kind of runes would you like me to inscribe? Would you rather have a multipurpose item or one that focuses on something specific, both have their pros and cons.”

“Multipurpose?”

Robert asked as he was not sure what Roland was talking about. Most of the magical equipment that people came across had one or two enchantments on it.

A suit of armor would most of the time be given a buffing rune that for instance increased the user’s strength. Then it would also have one active skill like a magical shield that could be activated on command.

Roland’s own armor could not be used by anyone that didn’t possess a runecrafting skill. Without access to the runic code inside the item, it would be impossible to activate all of their features. This was why when Robert previously used his runic shield he could only activate one of its effects that was set as default by Roland.

“Yes, I could place activation runes at the shields handles, you’d just need to focus your mana towards the activation rune to activate the spell. I wouldn’t put too many runes though, the more there are the quicker the shield will deteriorate.”

This explanation revealed some of his techniques. This was mostly learned by him when he was a runic blacksmith and when he had to be creative. There he just used spots in the weapons that when a person injected their mana into it would then activate the desired effect.

“Fascinating, a multipurpose runic structure... it sounds so elementary but also quite difficult if you take into consideration that the runesmith would have to customize the already created runic structure to fit the weapon...”

“It shouldn’t be that tough... you just have to alter the schematics slightly...”

“Alter the schematics?”

Lucille’s reaction to Roland’s statement was a bit strange. The girl’s eyes went wide and she looked like the first time she saw his runic armor.

‘Did I overestimate the runic knowledge of the basic runesmiths in this world?’

Roland was self-taught but this was not due to him wanting it. Due to this, he was still unaware of how other runesmiths operated. He thought back to all the schematics that he lifted from the stores.

That time he only attributed it to not being able to enter the inner parts of the stores. He thought that these runes were just the basics that everyone used and then altered for more promising effects. By how Lucille was acting this seemed not to be true, it looked like altering an already established rune was not an easy task.

“By Solaria, you must be a real prodigy Sir. Wayland, I just must inform the Professor about this, I’m sure you’ll have so much to teach each other!”

The girl started bouncing around like an overzealous slime monster. It took a few moments for her to calm down before the conversation could continue.

“How about we go to a store and pick out a shield for Sir. Robert here...”

“Ah yes... the shield!”

The group nodded and they finally moved towards the shopping district where most of the weapon and armor shops were at. As expected most of them were run by dwarfs. That was when another problem arose.

“Welcome to Molgud’s armor shop, how kin ah hulp ye?”

A robust dwarf asked after seeing Robert coming in but when he saw a peculiar-looking Runesmith in runic armor, his expression changed.

“Ey, what do yer want? Don’t ye have ur fancy smithy?”

“Huh? Is there a problem?”

“Sure is! Now git!”

The group was shooed away by the grumpy dwarf before they could even ask about any available shields. They attributed it to the dwarf having a bad attitude, Robert needed to be held back from going back inside. In his eyes this was blatant disrespect towards his lady, luckily she was able to convince him otherwise.

‘That was strange...’

Roland wondered if this dwarf just didn’t like him or something. For now, they just continued to the next shop that was also run by another dwarf. This one reacted the same after seeing the intricate runic gauntlets that Roland was wearing. It was clear that they knew who he was by now and didn’t appreciate it that he was coming into their shops.

“What’s wrong with these dwarves... this is the third shop...”

“Yes, they are extremely rude, should we go complaint to the mayor?”

Robert and Lucille weren’t sure what was going on, but now Roland was sure about the reason.

“It’s my fault.”

“Your fault Sir. Wayland? But you didn’t even do anything?”

“That doesn’t matter, I’m a human and I also signed a contract with the adventurer’s guild, the dwarven union had probably given an order to ban me from all of their stores.”

Roland had to give it to the union, they were somewhat neutral with him when he was just an up-and-coming craftsman in the woods. Now, on the other hand, the moment he signed a contract with the guild they decided to go to war with him. This also meant that he might have difficulty in getting good prices on the market. He would need to get in touch with some of the non-dwarven merchants.

“The dwarven union, why would they... ah!”

Lucille managed to realize what this was all about and stomped her foot in indignation. Robert on the other hand wasn’t that invested in runes or blacksmithing so he wasn’t aware of the union’s pull. After a quick explanation, he also looked maddened by this face.

“It’s fine, this was bound to happen, it’s just how the dwarves operate but not all of them are like that.”

Roland didn’t care that much as he had enough knowledge to get by already. There was also the guild that would probably supply him with well-priced materials if he really was banned from the market. Such an approach would have worked on a more inexperienced and unestablished craftsman but he was now somewhat entrenched.

“Dwarves don’t run all of the armor shops, think there was one place that my assistant told me about, we could try there... if all fails then Lady Lucille you’ll just have to buy the shield yourself without me.”

It would be better if Roland was with them so that he could pick up the best shield from the lineup but if he couldn’t then it was also fine. He was not really that interested in making this shield in the first place.

“Oh, a non-dwarven shop? That seems interesting.”

“Yes, my assistant always told me to go there as the goods are pristine.”

“Well, what are we waiting for, let us depart!”

So they went towards this shop with the ‘pristine’ goods. The journey took them away from the richer part of the city and more to where the regular people lived. The shop became visible soon and it had a characteristic sign with a bull with large horns on it.

“This is the place, excuse me.”

Roland was the first one to enter as he was leading the way. Robert on the other hand held the door open for his noble lady that just giggled. The inside looked a bit dark but it was certainly an armor shop with some shields on display.

“Greetings, what brings you to this Taurus smithy.?”

A peculiar bell sound resounded through this shop and it was followed up by a womanly voice. When he turned around he realized the meaning behind ‘pristine goods’ that his assistant was talking about.

‘So that’s why that idiot was always blushing like a thirteen-year-old schoolgirl whenever he talked about this store...’

Before him stood a large beastwoman, she was at least two meters tall and had large pointy horns on her head. Her hair was a mix of black and white, her legs were covered by long black leather boots. For a moment he expected to see hooved legs but by the shape that he was seeing she had regular feet.

The woman before him had quite the assets that were barely being contained by a large smithing apron. Her skin was slightly darkened and looked similar to caramel. She was quite toned while also packing on a bit of muscle, it was clear that those hands were good at swinging a heavy hammer. The source of the bell sound was also revealed by a cowbell-type accessory around this woman's neck.

"Ah yes, my friend here would like to purchase a shield."

"Your friend?"

The large woman turned to Robert while intently looking at the young man's features.

"Hm... not bad, I'll give you an 8!"

"You'll find the shields over there handsome, take your time."

She pointed Robert in the right direction. The young man was clearly not used to women like this one so he took a moment to process the information. His lady companion showed a cute pout before both of them left to look at the goods. The beastwoman then turned to Roland, she rested one hand on her hip while using the other one to rub her chin.

"Hm, you have a nice deep voice... but without seeing your face I'll have to give you a six for now."

"Uh, okay?"

Roland wasn't really sure what to say. The woman just laughed while standing behind the store counter. She then leaned forward which caused a certain bouncy place to be more visible.

"You must be Wayland the Runesmith, you're becoming famous around here... but maybe infamous would be the better word for it?"

"So I have heard... it doesn't seem that you care for the union's ban that much though..."

"Hah, those dwarfs can go screw a wild boar, they think that they own the whole market. Speaking of dwarfs... you didn't bring that red-haired fellow with you, did you?"

"Bernir? No... did he do something?"

It seemed that people were already aware of him and Bernir living in the woods. This was a good thing as it would get people to think twice before attacking his assistant again.

"Heh, I guess the weasel didn't tell you."

Roland wondered what this was all about, he did remember Bernir coming back with a black eye one day. He just told him that he got into a scuffle with some drunks at the bar, but maybe someone else was responsible for it.

"Ah... I must apologize for my workers' behavior, did he cause any damage to your shop?"

“To the shop? No, to my pride on the other hand... are you sure you want to take responsibility for that?”

The woman replied while licking her lips, Roland flinched slightly as the atmosphere changed. Before any sexual harassment from either side could take place, Robert returned with a shield in hand.

“This shield looks fine, what do you think of it, Wayland?”

Roland’s head did a quick side turn, as he moved his attention to Robert he could have sworn that he heard the woman clicking her tongue.

“Looks fine...”

The shield was a large kite shield that was in the shape of a teardrop. It was made from deep steel and was actually of high quality.

“Great, we shall take it!”

“I see that you have a good eye for quality, sugar. Do you want me to wrap it up?”

The woman poked some fun at Robert who was still confused. Soon the party left the shop, the lady blacksmith sent them away with a bright smile, though this smile was mostly directed at the hand filled with shiny coins that she was now holding.