

## Runesmith 133

### [Chapter 133 Runic Shield.](#)

‘I should get this over with first...’

Roland was back home with the shield in hand. After coming back he reprimanded his assistant for being a pervert. Bernir just explained that he just gave the woman from the shop a little tap on the posterior as she was bending down in front of him.

He started fearing for Bernir’s safety as that beastwoman would probably be able to crush Bernir’s neck like a ripe melon if she wanted. He had glanced at her classes and he noticed that she had leveled a warrior class at tier 1 together with the blacksmith class.

She had a bit of unique class distribution as she had gone through 25 levels of weaponsmith and was now an armorsmith with 20 levels to her. This meant that at level 100 she would be able to switch classes again, to what he could only speculate. She seemed open to doing business with him and might have had some ties to non-union merchants that could help him.

It seemed that he was universally disliked by the dwarves in this city. There were some good blacksmiths that outranked him, some might have even been tier 3 but there were no runesmiths besides him.

This would normally give him a big boost to his wares as he had the first adapter privileges here. The problem was the dwarven union that controlled a big chunk of the market. Most of this could be counteracted by him having a deal with the adventurer’s guild.

Even the union could not go against them as they required adventurers as bodyguards to protect their merchants and more. This didn’t mean that Roland wanted to procure everything through the guild, it felt a bit constricting. Being reliant on just one source was always an unwanted turn of events.

“It feels as if I was gone for a year...”

Roland opened up his workshop and was greeted by the usual stuffy air. This was quickly alleviated by pressing a button on the wall. One to turn on the light while the other turned on special runes that purified the air.

“What you can do with some frost and wind runes.”

He took a deep breath and could feel the fresh air entering his lungs. This rune that he developed would make any AC manufacturer jealous. It only used up renewable energy and was actually good for the environment.

This also brought an idea to Roland’s mind. If he had a contract with the guild he could probably convince the guild master to use some of his runes.

From his conversation with Lucille and after going through actual runic knowledge he realized something. The Runesmiths here weren’t very flexible. They stuck to the old schematics and didn’t even try to innovate.

All the runes on the weapons were all the same type and they just varied by grades. There was so much a runsmith could do to affect the runic structures. They could still make a highest rated rune but turn down the output for someone that had low mana reserves.

They could also do the exact opposite and crank it up. This would allow people to pick and choose items to fit their builds more. Ones liked to spam many attacking skills while others aimed for that one big attack that hit at that one right moment for maximum damage.

This could be done with the basic sharpness rune. It could turn a blade into a one-hit kill skill by using up most of the user's mana. The regular rune on the other hand only used a small fraction to keep the blade in working condition and the rune from breaking.

With that in mind, he could burst out onto the market with new innovative weapons. Weapons tailored to specific classes that took into account their unique characteristics. Ones that had multiple features for every occasion and even ones that abandoned all safety for that one last-ditch attack. Everything could be done but it would take some time till he gets a feel for the market.

'Time to get to work...'

Roland placed two books on his workbench. One looked more like a binder with strings tied through old scrolls. This 'book' showed him how to build the Runic furnace in which he would be able to melt the mana stones. The other one was a lot thinner as it had the recipes for some alloys.

These magic alloys would work as if they had an implanted mana stone in them. Thanks to them being a mix the runic structures would actually work much better. He would also save a lot of space as making the specific runic structure for the mana stone socket would not be needed.

This would also allow him to make runic items of smaller weapons like throwing knives or throwing stars. Those kinds of disposable weapons could turn into deadly bombs while also benefiting from their user's throwing and aiming skills.

He could also add paralyzing effects and even poison ones that didn't require the thief to dip the knives into any liquid. Thanks to this it would be quite safe to handle them even by someone that was not particularly dextrous.

'Making this smelter will take some time.'

Roland gave out a sigh while closing the books filled with crafting knowledge. Instead of the smelter, he needed to get this shield up and running. He placed it on the same workbench and examined it again first.

### **Heavy Kite Shield**

#### **High**

**A heavy shield made from deep steel, it gives a bonus against staggering to its user but requires a minimum of 55 strength to use. The user suffers a penalty to their mobility if the requirement isn't met.**

His analyzing skill had gotten a lot better. Thanks to it he could even tell the strength requirements of holding it. Tier 1 classes would have a hard time holding it in place as it was quite thick and bulky.

Thanks to this bulkiness he would have something that would hold the runic structures for quite some time.

Also thanks to this he could insert the mana stones into the rear side of the shield by just drilling into it. The holes would be shallow but it would be enough to place the mana stones in strategic positions. Thanks to the glue made by the alchemists from this world it would stay in place. Previously he needed to wedge it inside and have it physically stick in but now it was much easier.

With that in mind, he got to work. First, he needed to design the runic structure to fit this shield. His brother liked the idea of having a multi-purpose elemental runic shield. With how large this one was, there was enough place to allow Roland to do this.

He drew four circles around the handle that would be then drilled out to house the mana stones. Each mana stone would come from a specific elemental creature which would add a boost to the elemental runic structure.

There was no end to red mana stones as the dungeon was fire-based and the brown earth mana stones were also plentiful. The rarest kind would be the ice one which he had to take out from his mana stone safe.

The spell trigger points would be placed by the shield handle. Depending on which digit Robert used it would activate the corresponding spell effect. Besides these four there would be another special effect that would be activated by injecting the mana through all four points at once.

Roland learned a few special ways that he could activate the spells which didn't require all separate trigger points. Thanks to this he saved up on space while being able to make more combinations without running out of finger space.

For people, without the mana sense skill, it was a bit hard to learn to control these types of items. Everyone was able to inject their mana into runic items but it took some time to be able to do it with their fingers and not the entire hand.

Within a few hours, he had the schematic drawn up on a large piece of parchment. Even without his debugging skill, it was at the intermediate level. Bringing it up to the highest level gave him more experience as always but at his current level, this wasn't much.

Soon the shield found its way on the drilling table. It was clamped down in place for safety reasons and was ready to be drilled in.

The drilling table that he created was still utilizing his old drill. It possessed a crank on the side with which he could lower the drill down. With a couple of movements, the drill bit descended to the previously sketched on hole. Soon four identical openings that were in the shape of a tilted square were around the handle.

With those now in place, it was time for some hammering. Before he could move to runesmithing the shield needed to be heated up. Even with his enhanced skills, it would be hard to force the runic structures in without previously softening this shield up a bit.

The heated-up shield was grasped by Roland. He did not use any tongs as he had made special fire-resistant gloves for himself. With them on he would not be afraid to stick his hand into a burning fire.

His grip was as strong as a vice which meant that he did not have to worry about the shield moving out of place as he hammered it.

Soon the workshop was filled with the noise of the face of his hammer hitting the deep steel shield. The traces slowly took shape while glowing bright red before settling down and becoming hard to see.

Roland's mana started being drained at a staggering pace but it took a while before it dropped below fifty percent. At this point, he needed to take a breather or suffer the onset of the mana debuffs.

'This will probably take two or three days to make. Even when my skills increase, if the material gets better, the time it takes stays about the same.'

While Roland was busy with crafting this runic shield time continued to pass. The nobles mostly remained in the better part of the city with not many of them wandering outside. This was not due to Percival not allowing it but by their own volition.

There were not many nobles like Lucille De Vere that were interested in the way the commoners lived. With her knight, she was seen going around the city which caused problems for the mayor and guild master.

This was also why when they came to Roland's luxurious home out in the boonies they were together with two familiar faces.

"Why are you here?"

"Hey Wayland, how's it hanging? Do you wear that armor even at your home? Isn't it hard to work in?"

An extroverted half-elf called out to Roland from behind Lucille. For some reason, Lobelia was together with these two nobles and to her side was his favorite idiot.

"I'm not here because I want to, blast that old fart."

Armand complained while frowning, it was clear that the guild master had forced him to be a bodyguard for this pair of nobles. This was probably the right call, having a noble be snatched up for ransom would be not something that he would want.

"Good morning Sir. Wayland. I must say, this wall and that barbed wire look imposing."

Lucille curtsied a little bit while hiding in the shade of her umbrella.

"Can those two stay outside?"

Roland pointed to Armand and Lobelia that frowned.

"Hey Wayland, what is this favorable treatment? Let me see your house, don't be stingy!"

She protested while Armand didn't seem to care.

"If Sir. Wayland is against it..."

Lucille looked over to Robert who just nodded and then to her two bodyguards. Lobelia just pouted and stomped her foot on the ground while Armand decided to squat down.

“Great, come in then.”

Roland moved to the side and let Robert and Lucille enter through the gate. He was sure to close it afterward and also gave Agni something to do.

“Watch the entrance, if those idiots try to come in, bite their ankles.”

“Woof!”

Agni stood up proudly while guarding the entrance, Lucille chuckled while giving the older puppy a few pets.

“I’m going to miss you Agni, here.”

From inside her pouch, she pulled out a large meaty sausage that she promptly gave to the tamed beast.

“Don’t overfeed him...”

Roland grumbled while moving towards his house. Robert and Lucille started looking around. They could see the opened log cabin with a red-haired half-dwarf in it. The moment he saw the girl he was quick to get up and run over.

“Greetings M’lady! This Bernir is at your service!”

He bowed his head quite low, unbeknownst to Lucille he was checking her out. The girl was wearing a long dress but this didn’t keep the horny dwarf from licking his lips. Roland was aware of this and hoped that Robert would not be.

“Bernir, go fetch the shield.”

“Ahh... sure, I’ll go get it!”

Bernir straightened out and went back into the wooden shed. In a minute he was back with a runic version of the shield that Robert picked out for himself.

“Here, try it on.”

Roland took the shield from Bernir and then handed it to Robert. The knight clutched it tightly while trying to get a good feel for it. Robert could see that the shield’s rear side had changed and now had four mana stones around the handle.

“It fits my hand well.”

“Great, let me explain the runic structure to you, how about we move here.”

Roland pointed to the side as he wanted Robert to activate some of the spell effects. Doing it right next to his house could cause some damage so they all moved to the backyard.

“Sir. Wayland... What are those? Windmills?”

Lucille pointed to the two large wind turbines that were spinning around in his backyard. After a week of work, they managed to clean the backyard out from the debris and all the wires were placed back into the ground.

“Ah... it’s something similar, let’s test the shield though.”

Roland moved his head towards Robert as he didn’t want to have Lucille snooping around those turbines. He feared that she might start asking him more questions which would prolong their stay here. His plan was to just hand them the shield, take the money, and wish them good luck in their life.

He wasn’t even sure if he would ever contact Lucille with the magic crystal ball. This runic professor sounded like an interesting person but this would mean that he would need to get involved with nobles yet again.

“Good, now try infusing your mana into the shield with your index finger.”

Robert nodded and while gripping the shield tightly he tried to infuse the shield with his mana. The runes on it started glowing for a moment but then the light faded away without anything happening.

“Not like that, just your index finger, you are still using your whole hand, give me the shield for a moment, I’ll show you.”

Robert’s brows furrowed a bit but he gave the shield away. Roland held it out in such a way that his brother could see how he was gripping it. When he used his index finger to inject mana now the shield started glowing red and soon a red shield of flames appeared.

Then to show off the features he used his middle finger which changed the shield into one made from green wind energy. While this shield was active a lot of wind was produced, while it wasn’t as solid as the other shields it could be used to blow things like poison and smoke away.

“Can you see?”

Robert looked at the magical shields that were created and his eyes seemed to lit up. While he was focused on Roland holding the shield, Lucille was seen walking away from the two.

“Hm?”

Roland turned his head towards this blue-haired noble girl. She was clearly going towards one of the wind turbines that were further in the backyard. These turbines were about in the middle of the backyard, the same one that had mine runes buried in it.

‘What is that idiot doing...’

His lovely assistant was nowhere to be seen as he could hear sounds of hammering in the log shed. Roland was far too busy with his work to pay much attention to the backyard, Bernir knew how to restock the mines and Agni would not set them off at this point.

The mines were refilled after the fiasco with the thieves but before letting Robert and Lucille in he did have Bernir tie a rope to block the path further towards the backyard. He even hung up a ‘Don’t enter’ sign there. Lucille apparently ignored this sign and slipped past the rope while Roland was showing Robert the new shield.

“Stop, don’t move you idiot!”

His voice was loud but this didn't stop the girl from moving forward. The only thing he could do was to activate a somewhat unfinished agility boost that was only crafted into the armor covering his arms.

Robert was stunned for a moment as he saw Roland run towards Lucille at full speed as if he wanted to ram into her. Almost at the same time of Lucille stepping into one of the mines, Roland managed to arrive next to her.

The runic shield was still in his hand so he protected the ice mage from the explosion while holding her closer towards his own body. The explosion was somewhat mild but if Lucille stepped into it, her foot would have been gone.

"What do you think you are doing? Didn't you see the rope and sign?"

"I...I'm s-sorry Sir. Wayland I just saw the runic symbols and couldn't cont... huh?"

"Eh?"

"What?"

Robert was closely behind Roland but instead of helping Lucille up, he was looking at Roland's face. While unsure what was happening Roland noticed something. He could feel that something was missing, something that was previously on his head...

#### [Chapter 134 Brotherly bonds.](#)

There it was, down on the ground. A helmet made from metal with small openings for the eyes and a somewhat wider bottom for easy fitting.

This was Roland's spare helmet that didn't really fit Bernir's armor that he had made. It was also not fastened to Roland's face as it was back down in the dungeon. During his rescue sprint, he had forgotten about this part.

He did not think that he needed to fasten his helmet tightly to his body. This was supposed to take around ten minutes before Robert and Lucille left. He had not foreseen that the runic groupie would be attracted by his wind turbines so much that she would ignore the warning signs.

"Sir. Wayland... your face."

Lucille was the first one to speak up. She looked at Roland's face and then slowly moved her gaze towards Robert. This turned to a back and forth, it was clear that the two young men had similar facial features.

A similar jawline, a similar head shape, and hair color even their noses were somewhat the same. There were enough differences to keep them apart but also many similarities for people that were familiar with one of them to notice it. Lucille was a person like that, she knew Robert's face quite well and could see the resemblance.

"Roland? Is that really you?"

Robert broke the silence before Lucille could ask a question. Just like Roland was able to recognize his brother at a glance, Robert was able to do the same.

“Roland? Not Wayland?”

Lucille asked while still being confused.

“Roland? Never heard of him.”

Roland after moving away from Lucille quickly turned around and grabbed the helmet that fell off from his head. Without turning around he tried to place it back on his head. Maybe if he played it off he could get Robert to think that he just resembled his long-lost brother. Before he could place the helmet on his head though, he felt a firm hand grasp his shoulder and yanking him back.

“Stop pretending, do you think I’m stupid? I can recognize my own brother!”

It seemed that it was over, the secret was out. Roland didn’t know what to say, he froze. Many thoughts went through his head, he remembered his old life back at the Arden estate. He did not want to go back, he was just about to build his life back up in this city.

This was supposed to be a new start for him with no shackles binding him. His own little life that he was fully responsible for and that he could shape in the way that he wanted to.

Would running away be the only way? Would he need to escape to a different country to be free of his noble title? His mind raced, old memories of his old life where he spent whole days slaving away at his job making money for others.

Then they were replaced by more recent memories of the fencer that had attacked him about six years ago. He still did not know who from the Arden estate had bribed that man to go kill him. The only person that he could exclude was his father, the rest even Robert here could have been the perpetrator.

“Huh?”

Before he could utter a word Robert did something strange. Roland expected his half-brother to be mad or stunned but instead, he moved in closer. He was charged and at first, he thought that he was being attacked but that was just Robert’s way of hugging.

“By the gods, you are alive!”

Instead of any hits, he received a big hug from his brother.

“Oh my...”

Lucille moved her hand towards her mouth and was unsure what to do. She watched as two armored men embraced each other, at least one of them. Roland had his hands spread apart in an awkward fashion as he did not expect this act of affection from his half-brother that bullied him in their youthful days.

“Um, Robert?”

After a moment he gently tapped his half-brother’s shoulder which somehow brought him back to his senses. He moved away and the bear hug came to an end.

“You were alive...”

“I guess...”

“YOU WERE FUCKING ALIVE!”

Robert’s face switched from one of joy to one of rage. Before he knew it, Roland could see a large fist coming his way. This was an unexpected turn of events, so even though his class multiplier gave him higher physical stats than Robert, he was unable to dodge this punch.

“Hey, what’s the commotion about?”

Bernir stormed out of the workshop to witness his boss being punched. He flew for a few meters and even tumbled once from the force of this hit.

“Is everything okay in there? What was that explosion?”

“Ye? What’s going on in there? Let us in!”

The voices of Armand and Lobelia could also be heard. The knocks on the gate turned into loud thumps as it was clear that someone was trying to ram it open.

“Sir. Robert, please calm down!”

Lucille tried shouting but for the first time, Robert ignored her calls and charged towards Roland that was slowly getting off the ground.

“Fuck...”

Roland spit out some blood after being sucker-punched. The world was slightly spinning as he tried to recover, his half-brother wouldn’t give him a chance though. This didn’t mean that he would just let himself be beaten up.

Back on his feet, he put his guard up. Both men were wearing metal armor so even when Robert punched Roland’s arm guards he wasn’t hurting his fingers. After taking a couple more blows Roland finally caught Robert’s fist with his hand.

The second fist was also caught by Roland which turned the fistfight into a battle of strength. This competition would go to the younger brother that had a higher combined strength stat.

Robert didn’t seem to want to give up though, as his hands were trembling and being pushed back he moved in for a headbutt. A clean hit on Roland’s nose sent blood splashing everywhere.

Roland didn’t falter though, his grip was kept on Robert’s fists. His head flew back but it quickly returned as he smashed his forehead into his brother’s nose himself. Robert’s nose made a cracking sound as he rebounded from the hit.

Both of them moved a step back, their noses bleeding and brows crinkled. It didn’t seem that the fight was over but for Roland, it was time to get serious. The two moved forward, both of them going into hand-to-hand combat positions.

Before the brotherly fight could continue a large ball of snow landed between them. It exploded into chunks of ice that caused the two to jump back.

“Sir. Robert, Sir. Wayland, please get a hold of yourselves!”

It was an ice-type spell used by Lucille. It caused its targets to be covered in a thin layer of ice without causing much damage. She quickly ran between the two and it was clear that she would not allow another altercation to happen.

“Don’t worry Boss, I’ll help you!”

After Lucille’s spell Bernir appeared with his trusty runic launcher in hand. He had the weapon up and ready, pointing it at the man that attacked Roland.

“Hey, get this thing off me!”

“No, don’t hurt Agni, he is a good boy!”

In the back, at the gate where he left Agni, Armand started shouting. The Ruby Wolf followed the instructions his master gave him. He was in the process of chomping down on Armand’s ankle after the pugilist forced himself through the gate.

Lobelina on the other hand was clinging to one of Armand’s arms and trying to keep him from punching Agni. Her protests seemed to be working as Armand found himself not delivering any blows to the guard wolf.

Roland gave out a sigh before straightening himself out. He moved his hand to his nose which was dripping blood. He looked to Robert who was doing the same, the only difference was that he had managed to break Robert’s while his own was still mostly in one piece.

“We should talk.”

“I agree...”

The two brothers nodded at each other while Lucille gave out a sigh of relief.

“Put that thing away Bernir, Agni let go of that idiot’s leg.”

Roland called out to his two allies that followed his order, it was time to move the conversation inside of the house where the nosy guild members couldn’t hear them.

...

“Here.”

“Thank you.”

“I’ll be outside if you need me, Boss.”

Bernir passed some tea over to Roland and Robert while the two sat opposite each other. Lucille looked between the two and followed the half-dwarf outside. The door to the house was closed and the two half-brothers were finally left alone.

“Robert...”

“Roland...”

The two men looked at each other without talking. After the emotional outburst, it seemed that none of them knew how to follow it up. Their wounds had been healed by some healing potions, so talking was not a problem.

“That was a nice right hook.”

“You’ve become quite strong as well.”

“Well uh.”

“Why did you do it?”

Robert asked.

“Why did I do what?”

“Yes, why did you not come back to the estate. Everyone thinks that you are dead, father went away to look for you.”

“That old man did? Impossible, why would he care about someone like me?”

Roland replied in a mocking tone, he could believe a lot of things but not that his ‘daddy’ was concerned with him that much.

“What do you mean? Father...”

“That old man only cares about how he and the Arden estate look, let us not talk about him.”

Roland started becoming irritated when the theme changed to his father. He wasn’t sure why but he disliked that man. He could not see him as a proper fatherly figure but as a tyrant that was mostly interested in upholding his family name. He was also the reason that the original Roland had died.

“What do you intend to do?”

“What do you mean? You must return home with me, we must inform the family that you are alive!”

Robert smacked his palm into the table as he shouted.

“I don’t think that would be a good idea...”

“Why? Why do you reject the Arden name? Do you wish to spend your life as a commoner?”

“Yes, that is my intention. There is nothing that you or anyone from that estate can offer me.”

Robert looked a bit stupefied, it was as if he could not fathom why anyone would reject the title of a noble. For someone whose main goal in life was to prove that he was worthy of the noble title, this was a hard pill to swallow. It was as if Roland was denying the path that Robert had chosen for himself.

“It can’t offer you anything? You jest. Listen Roland, I know that I have not been kind to you when we were younger but bonds between family can not be broken this easily, return with me, I’m sure father will understand.”

Roland was a bit surprised that Robert actually apologized to him for being a little shit when they were younger. The second part where he still intended to bring him home still bothered him though. It didn't seem that Robert would let this go and there weren't many things that Roland could do to stop him.

Killing him was thrown out of the window, there was no way that Roland would go through with something like that. Begging and convincing him would not work either.

There was a moment of weakness in Roland's mind in which he thought that holding Lucille hostage and making Robert sign a contract of silence would be a good idea. Making more enemies with the nobles that were from Lucille's side was a big problem. Then there was the last option, telling him the truth.

"Stop, I can't return to the estate, at least not before I'm strong enough."

"Can't return? Strong enough? What do you mean?"

Roland gave out a sigh before leaning back in his chair.

"Fine, I'll tell you the truth. It started when our father allowed me to leave the estate when I was ten years old..."

Robert was given the real reason why Roland was skeptical about returning home. There was someone trying to kill him and that someone was probably in the Arden estate. He told him about the man that he killed together with the three adventurers and how he then fled the city without disclosing their real identities.

"That's what happened... I never knew... but who would want to do such a thing to a member of the Arden estate..."

"Your mother Francine? Reyner, Edwin... should I list out the entire family? If we weren't talking now, I'd still consider you as well."

"Mother? She would never!"

Robert slammed his fist into the table once more but soon started thinking.

"She would not..."

"Wouldn't she?"

Roland asked while Robert leaned back some more, it seemed that even the son wasn't sure if the mother wouldn't pull a stunt like that.

"She never liked me, no one ever did, not even you. You know how they all are, being the son of a commoner is reason enough but you seem to have realized it by now."

Roland shrugged, he could already tell that Robert had been discriminated against by the other nobles and that he knew how it worked. He would need to gain many merits before his status could be on equal footing with the pure breed nobles.

"I can't imagine our elder brothers being behind this..."

"Can't you?"

“1...”

Robert crossed his hands over one another while lowering his head as he started thinking. Their older brothers were different, they were real full-blown nobles. They had no stigma of being born from a commoner mother behind them.

Reyner was the firstborn and Edwin was the second. Even though they came from the same mother it was known that they didn't like each other that much.

Wentworth their father didn't care about anything like age so it was an open contest to which one of them would be the heir. Even Roland and Robert could be seen as potential threats to their success. Thus Roland did not think it would be that strange for one of them to take a chance on eliminating him.

Roland also knew that the two were also cold towards Robert as well as him. The two were older so they were already out working as squires or trainy knights even when he was younger. Neither he nor Robert probably knew what those two were doing or thinking.

“You are correct, I can't say that they would be above it. Brother Reyner and Edwin were always busy with their training...”

It seemed that Robert also agreed with him, he as well didn't really know the true character between these two.

“This is why... I must implore you to not say any of this to any of our family members.”

“But I'm sure we can trust our father, if we bring it up with him, he will help us find the culprit!”

“You really do trust our father don't you?”

Roland leaned back while replying in a mocking tone. He knew that Robert was trying to get into the good graces of their father and placed him up on a pedestal.

“What if it's Edwin? What if it's your mother? Would he choose them over me?”

There was a clear hierarchy between nobles and Roland was right on the bottom. Even if one of the culprits was revealed they might not even be punished. Roland expected nothing more than a slap on the wrist, maybe house arrest and Robert also knew this.

“Also why would I want to leave, I like it here.”

“You want to remain in this small town in the middle of nowhere as a simple blacksmith?”

“Simple blacksmith? Could a simple blacksmith overpower a trained knight that is older than him?”

“Overpower? If we continued I would have...”

“You would have what? Did you forget about these?”

Roland replied while moving his hand up. He was still wearing his runic gauntlets and as he injected mana into them the runic traces lit up. During the fight, he was not trying to kill his brother, which would be quite easy to do if he activated his runic attack spells.

“You changed...”

Robert quieted down after seeing the glowing magic gauntlet. From his previous experiences in the dungeon, he knew that he would not stand a chance in an all-out fight with Roland. Even less if he was wearing a full set of runic gear.

“Can I trust you to keep my secret?”

“Do you truly not wish to return home?”

“Not now... maybe in the future, I will.”

Roland replied he would have to put his trust in his older brother. Since adventuring with him down in the dungeons he could tell that he wasn't a bad person. If he gave him his word, he would most likely follow through.

“I can make that promise but under one condition. You'll have to stay in contact.”

“Stay in contact?”

“Yes, we can use Lady Lucille's crystal, you can use it, correct?”

“Yes, I do have the mage skills required for it...”

Roland was a bit surprised, his older brother seemed more concerned with his well-being than he had previously thought. When he arrived here, he looked to be more of a pompous prick but he was showing clear concern for a family member.

“If it's just that...”

Roland nodded at the request, if it was just what he wanted then it was fine.

“So...you and Lucille? Planning to get married?”

“Huh, what? Me and the lady? That's preposterous!”

Robert was surprised at the quick change of theme that he almost fell down from his chair.

“Really? It seems like she likes you.”

“She does?”

Roland narrowed his eyes at his older brother. He wasn't sure if he was just dense or the barrier in status was keeping him from committing.

“Well, I wish you both luck, you'll probably need it...”

The two brothers continued to converse for a while longer. Which left the group of four people and one wolf in the dark.