

Runesmith 145

[Chapter 145 Misunderstanding.](#)

Roland was not sure how to approach his second potential employee. While Bernir came to him and begged him for it, this time around he would be the one trying to poach a good worker from the guild. While he didn't feel bad about that part he still was getting closer to his goal of becoming a business owner.

After a long moment of awkwardness, he was able to gather the strength to ask the question. Elodia was acting somewhat strange during the whole debacle, she was not composed and her eyes darted all over the place.

"You want me to work for you?"

"Yes, I've been meaning to expand my smithy and add my own wares but this is not something I can do alone..."

Roland tried continuing but he could feel that something was wrong. The woman next to him had stopped walking and was making a stern expression. Would she refuse him outright?

She could have had some circumstances that kept her away from taking up other job offers. She also could be the type that was loyal to her workplace.

"Ah yes, of course, it would be work-related..."

He could hear her mumbling some words before fixing her glasses and straightening up. Elodia was back to her old self and it looked like she was going to give him a reply. That is, if a certain person didn't call out to them from afar.

"Oh, what do my elven eyes see? Big sis and Wayland coming home together?"

Roland looked to the voice and spotted Elodia peeking out from the corner of a large property. He had been around here before but never took the time to go inside. From what he knew, this was one of the orphanages that this new growing city had.

There were actually only two with the bigger one belonging to the church of Solaria. That one was much larger and had more funds that came from the worshipers. This allowed the kids to get through their childhood days without many woes as they were provided for.

It had some drawbacks as the children were asked to get clergy-related classes if they ever wanted to stay past a certain age. One of Roland's old acquaintances came from such a place and she made her disdain for it quite noticeable.

Through this fact sometimes orphanages like this could be better for the development of the child. They would not be forced to go in one particular direction but this depended on the caretakers.

There was no money to be gained here and without a sponsor, such establishments were mostly doomed to fail. It was surprising from Roland's perspective that Elodia was somehow able to make it work.

But, she had to still work long hours so there were probably times where the kids remained without supervision. From what he knew, there were three proper adults here. Well, one of them was more like a child in a man's body though.

"Good evening, Lobelia. We were just talking about work."

Roland just nodded as he was not sure what the half-elf was getting at. Lobelia on the other hand looked over to Elodia and started grinning for some reason. Through the long walk, he had managed to explain the gist of the deal.

There was not much that he could do here until he had the plans for the new store. Elodia would require a contract, her wages needed to be decided and for what she would be responsible for.

Roland wanted to force the bulk of the operation onto Elodia's shoulders. He did not want to worry about the accounting side of the business. That didn't mean that he would not be checking the books to see if someone wasn't cheating him out of his money.

Things like interior design, store uniforms, and what the market looked like would be on her. He wished to have a manager to take care of that part of the business while he focused more on his craft. Spending long hours just sitting behind the store counter was not something that he ever wished to do again.

"Ms. Elodia I hope you think about my proposal. You don't have to hurry as I haven't decided about the store layout yet but if you decide to accept I would be glad for your input. If you find yourself unconvinced I would also appreciate it if you could point me in the right direction, you probably know someone who would be interested?"

It was clear to him that the woman was acting strange through the entire walk. He wasn't sure but maybe she was more loyal to the guild than he previously thought. If she refused then his only option would be to make a notice and then interview people.

Without knowing many people in this city he would rather ask for the opinion of someone that he somewhat trusted. He knew that this woman had a head on her shoulders and would probably point him in the right direction.

"Ah, yes Mr. Wayland, I'll give it a thought..."

She trailed off a bit at the end while bowing down with her head and slowly turning around. It seemed that he would now be able to return home and give his new endeavor some more thought. Bernir was tasked with getting the contractors ready, with the city still being in development the waiting times were still long.

"Wait, you can't just leave like that!"

While Roland was about to turn and go back home he saw Lobelia bolting out of the orphanage. She was followed by two kids that quickly followed her instructions.

"Get him!"

His legs were grabbed and clung to by two young boys while Lobelia started yanking on his arm.

"Don't be a stranger, Wayland, it's already late. How about you stay for some tea?"

“Um?”

Even while the elven girl was yanking and the kids were trying to push him towards their house, he remained without movement. His basic stats were quite high and with his multiplier of two, he would give warriors at level hundred a run for their money.

“Damn, what are you made of?”

Luckily for him, Elodia was quick to deliver divine judgment to Lobelia’s head with a quick fist strike. The two kids that were pushing and pulling him were instantly frightened and started running away.

“Run for it, big sis is angry!”

They scattered in two separate directions which caused Elodia to stop. It was clear that these two knew that if they separated that she couldn’t get them both. This was clearly not their first rodeo but he wasn’t sure if they realized that they would have to return home sooner or later and probably get punished anyway.

“Wayland, what are you doing here?”

While he was free from the clutches of the two kids another bigger child arrived. It was Armand who was holding a half-empty bottle that was probably filled with cheap booze. Roland didn’t answer as he was still ready to just go, instead, he saw Lobelia sprinting over to him and then whispering something into his year.

“No... them?”

He then turned around and looked at Elodia with a raised brow. His gaze then turned to Roland before going back to Elodia once more. Armand then turned to Lobelia and the two started grinning at each other.

“Well... then I’ll be going, Ms. Elodia please think over my ...”

“Oh, where do you think you are going?”

Instead of being able to leave, he felt Armand’s muscular arm being slung over his shoulder as the man got dangerously close.

“What are you doing?”

He asked but was just petted on the shoulder instead.

“Don’t be a stranger, I’m sure you’ll love the stew!”

Now instead of Lobelia and the kids trying to pull him inside it was Armand. With the strength difference being a low lower now he would have to actually actively resist Armand if he didn’t want to get pulled inside.

For some reason, the two kids returned with more people and now he was getting yanked inside by two adults and five kids. In the corner of his eye, he could see Elodia rubbing her forehead which was showing a large forehead vein. It was clear that she was about to blow a gasket.

While deliberating on what to do an image of Bernir popped into his head. He recalled him mentioning that he should stop locking himself up in the forge and should meet more people.

His relationship with Armand has mellowed down through the months. While he still thought he was an idiot, he was more or less a harmless one. Lobelia was a chatterbox and Elodia was more similar to him in the way she acted. Maybe staying over would not be such a bad idea and it could sway his potential employee to accept him as her new boss?

“Okay fine, stop. I’ll stay over...”

The moment he said this the kids burst out in celebration. It was as if they won some kind of battle; it took Elodia’s angry look to quiet them down. Soon, he and the rest entered the orphanage.

Instantly when he entered he was greeted by the loud sound of child laughter. This was already different from the orphanages that he saw at the church grounds. Loud talking, running, and even laughing was forbidden. The kids would be punished if they didn’t behave properly.

While here it seemed that the young ones respected the authority of the three adults here. There was a certain sense of freedom that they were allowed. It was also interesting how much they quieted down whenever Elodia gave them the glare. She was clearly the boss around here and the kids fell in line when asked.

When he stepped inside he noticed some other things. First was the state of the building, it looked to be quite old. It was made from red bricks that were slowly crumbling. It was clear to him that they only managed to get this place as no one else would be willing to invest in it.

The floors were cracked and with each step, he could hear some strange sounds. While the place has been cleaned out and he could not see any dust or cobwebs its state was not good.

The building was wide and had two stories. There was a certain lack of doors and the ones that were there looked like they could fall out of their hinges any moment.

“Children, supper is ready.”

While he was being led forward by Armand, Elodia went away somewhere and he could hear her calling out to the children. Her voice was surprisingly loud and domineering which was a contrast to the down-to-earth way she talked during business hours.

He was pushed into one of the side rooms by Armand who also for some reason had a slightly stupider expression on his face than usual. Lobelia as well, she was acting strange while whispering with Armand and always having a dumb smile on her face when looking at him. It felt like the two were playing some kind of prank on him.

“Take a seat, we need to have a talk between men.”

Armand pointed to a wooden chair while he himself occupied one that was opposite it. Roland and he were in one of the side rooms. There were chalk drawings that probably the kids drew all over the walls and some wooden toys were scattered on the floor.

“Okay?”

After sitting down Armand leaned back and started asking some questions.

“So how long have you been eyeing my sister for this?”

Roland wasn't sure what this was all about at first but then he finally realized. Elodia must have informed her siblings about the job offer. This did somewhat explain their strange behavior.

“I've been considering her for a few weeks, after going through it in my head I don't think I could find a better person in this town..”

Armand's eyes opened wider and he was clearly surprised by the answer. He leaned forward and the conversation continued.

“Damn, not even denying it at all. I thought you'd be more of the reserved type but you speak like someone with a lot of experience?”

“I wouldn't say that I have a lot of experience but I think I at least have more practice with such things than others?”

Roland had been running his own little undertaking himself which brought him more experience in the field. Managing other people to do the correct work would be something new and for that, he needed people that would not screw him over in the long run.

“Hoh, not hiding your previous conquests either? We two might not be that different after all...”

Armand nodded as if he realized something. Roland on the other hand didn't know what he was talking about. Armand clearly had no business sense nor should he be able to relate to a craftsman-like Roland.

“So you want Elodia, is that it?”

Armand asked and Roland replied just as fast.

“Yes.”

“Good but can I really leave my big sister up to you? How should I know that you won't abandon her or just replace her?”

“Replace her? I don't think that could happen, I don't think that I could find a better fit than Ms. Elodia. We will of course form the right contract for the occasion so I don't think there should be a problem?”

“What? A contract?”

Armand quickly jumped up as for some reason he was stunned when the contract was mentioned. Then he grasped his head as if he realized something.

“No, wait... if you do that... won't you be my older brother? But aren't you younger than me? I didn't think this was so serious!?”

Soon he stormed out of the room somewhere, Roland was confused about his behavior. Then after a few minutes of silence, he could hear Lobelia shouting as well. The whole orphanage erupted in a sea of voices. He had no idea what was being discussed but Elodia joined the fray as well.

When he peeked out from around the corner he could see both Armand and Lobelia kneeling down on the ground. Elodia was holding a ladle that was slightly bent out of shape. There was also an imprint of it on Armand's head.

After waiting for some more he was picked up by one of the young children. The girl looked cheerful and somewhat reliable even at such a young age. It was a bit funny but the moment he saw her he could tell that the girl was imitating Elodia.

Her mannerisms, the way her hair was done and even the glasses made her look like a miniature version of the guild receptionist. Soon he found himself at a large table with a lot of kids, there were at least twenty of them here.

Elodia and the others did a small prayer to Solaria but it wasn't as excessive as some of the sermons that went down at the proper church. The kids were quick to dine in while he himself didn't eat much. With so many orphans around it just didn't feel right.

Only when he was stared down by Elodia did he take up some of the stew that they offered. The ingredients were quite basic but it was surprisingly tasty. Roland recalled that the food at the inns and pubs he used to eat was far blander than this.

He found himself finishing his bowl rather quickly and having to hold himself back from asking for seconds. With Elodia being such a good cook, he even started deliberating if he should have her make something at the store for the customers. Maybe opening a little dining area where they could rest and eat would work out.

Roland then noticed something. Even though these kids weren't living under optimal conditions, even though their clothes were all filled with patches. Even though the home wasn't the best nor was the food, they looked happy.

This brought him back to his old memories from the five years he spent at the Arden estate. The food was better, the house was luxurious and the food was made by people with special cooking skills. But, there was a certain empty feeling whenever he was around his old family.

This certain feeling for some reason was not there in this room. The way the people acted even with Armand and Lobelia acting silly. This felt different, they all seemed to have a somewhat deeper connection with each other.

'This... this doesn't feel so bad...'

Soon a stray thought entered Roland's mind and was followed by the faintest smile.

[Chapter 146 Report.](#)

'It's surprising that they can live in such conditions and still have a smile on their faces.'

Roland was walking back home after being forced to take part in the family get-together. It was loud, some of the kids smelled rather odd and he did his best to leave early. Even with all of those downsides to the experience, there was a certain warm fuzzy feeling. A feeling that he long forgot after coming to this world.

He didn't ask too many questions as he didn't want to be too nosy or get too involved in their situation. It would be easy to solve their problems with money but he didn't really have a reason to do so. This was still a harsh environment that they were living in. His funds would be better spent on expanding his workshop than looking after children that seemed healthy enough.

The guards nodded their heads at him and allowed him to leave. The gate was closed and he had to exit through the side door. As with other cities like Albrook, there was a curfew. This hour fell at nine P.M., all the gates would be closed at this hour and the guards started their patrol.

This didn't mean that the locals couldn't go into Taverns to have some fun. This only meant that they would be controlled if they ever wished to leave the city at this hour. Things like large carriages would be stopped and would need to wait till the gates opened in the early morning.

'It's good to be a higher grade adventurer at these times.'

Not all things were equal though. The adventurers had a free pass to move back and forth between the dungeon and the city. Everyone knew that the adventurers were the reason that this city was prospering. It would not be the best idea to slow down their biggest revenue stream which was monster parts from the dungeon.

Without his helmet to show him the way, Roland switched to a pair of glasses. With his skills to compress the runes even further he was able to enchant them with the night vision spell. It was a bit annoying but walks like this brought him back to reality and how this was not his previous world.

If he was in a leading position in this city he would get some construction workers to set up some street lights. The road that was leading up to the dungeon was also not in the best condition. It was just your average dirt road that was paved out by adventurer footprints.

Luckily there were some attributes to this world that didn't totally make it a backward medieval world. For one thing, there was no stench of a horse or human excrement some people would attribute to such times. This was all thanks to classes like beast and monster tamers that is. Creatures like slimes and some slug-type creatures liked to feast on those smelly things.

This kept the streets clean, it didn't take much to tame a few slimes so low level adventurers could earn some coin by just pointing their pets to do the work. There were actually some large scale operations that focused on slime cleaning. The little creatures were quite handy to have around.

"I should hurry up..."

Roland increased his pace as he had an appointment to keep. Today he would give back the improved tier 3 schematic that he had worked on. Even with it being the correct one he could not make it work. It was clear that he lacked some kind of layering skill to make it connect.

The tier 3 runes were clearly not made by a simple stacking method. There was a part that he was missing and maybe the person he was exchanging notes with could help him with it.

Back at home, he was met with a rather drunk Bernir and a sleepy-looking Agni. The wolf was busy munching on some mana stones. With his skills not being topped of it would take some time before he could advance him into the higher tier 2 adult Ruby Wolf.

“Hey boss, how did it go? Did little Elodia agree to the offer?”

“I’m not sure, she was acting a bit strange at the beginning..”

The girl was a bit more panicky before he presented his offer. She even looked somewhat disappointed afterwards but he still hoped to make it work.

“Oh did she refuse?”

“No, I think she will think it through.”

“Hah, if she is smart she will come work here!”

The biggest benefit that he was offering was not the increased salary, it was the weekend breaks. If someone took a moment to think about it, they would be asked to work less and get paid more.

The only problem he could see Elodia having with his offer was his store being new. If she left the guild and his store went under then she would be out of a job. But seeing as she was talented in that regard, she would probably be able to get her old job back.

“If she refuses we’ll have to go to the city hall and post a notice.”

He would rather get Elodia to work with him but if she refused that would not keep him from going through with his store. There was just too much work to be done for him and Bernir alone. They already had a part timer arriving in a few days that would take over some of Bernir’s duties.

“Aye.”

Roland entered his house while Bernir remained outside of his shed. The log shed in question had been extensively worked on by the dwarf. It now even had a nice side bedroom where Bernir placed a regular bed in. His own little place that was all his.

Back in his own house, Roland moved to his own bedroom where the communication orb was in. Thanks to it being a runic variant he was able to discover a few outside uses.

While the program inside was above his skill level he would be able to recreate the rune. It was tier 2 and didn’t require much work besides a similar medium like the golem core that he already had some practice on.

The program inside of this rune was like a router that connected to a gate outside. This was all that it was doing along with some other runes that were used to forward the user’s voice and image.

While if he just recreated the rune’s design he would only get another crystal ball, if he altered where the signal was transferred to, he could create his own closed system.

This was something that he was working on as he wanted to create a set of communication devices around his workshop. One would be placed in the new store while another would be down in his workshop. With a set of these devices, he would not need to run back and forth if his workers needed something from him.

“Uh... what am I doing?”

Roland gave out a sigh as he was looking over his own face in the mirror. Having spent a big chunk of his time hiding it, he was not used to displaying it to others. Even less to people that he meant to impress, it felt like he was back in time and trying to get through a job interview.

The communication crystal gave out a sound and after poking it with his index finger it was activated. Soon he was greeted by a familiar-looking black cat.

“Good evening young friend, the moon is splendid today, isn’t it?”

“Ah yes, it is...”

The clouds in the area made the full moon a bit less pronounced in his city but this little comment had Roland thinking, was this cat a believer of the moon god instead of the sun goddess?

“I’ve received your schematics...”

Roland could see the cat stretching out on the ground as before he was lazily sitting on some kind of giant pillow. It didn’t seem that Lucille was anywhere in this room. In the background, he could see some shelves filled with books and strange alchemical concoctions being brewed.

This was a peculiar sight to behold as they were floating up in the air by themselves. To someone that was not informed about magic this might seem like much, to Roland on the other hand it was nothing out of the ordinary.

It might have seemed like this was some hard-to-do spell but the reality was different. Something like this was mostly done through memorization. The spell caster would perform the task manually first while a spell was cast in the background. This would record the motions they went through and when it was recast it would perform them in the same fashion.

This was only the simplest variation of this kind of spell which was also the worst. It didn’t give much space for error. For instance, if the potions that were being floated around were in the wrong vials or the weight was not quite the same, it would break the spell.

A spellcaster could add layers onto the spell. It was similar to a program that followed logical conditions. If the weight was not in order one could program in a function to halt the spell, get rid of the excess of the potion, and so forth.

This was no simple matter as most of the mages followed the premade spells just like runesmiths did. Only the higher tier Archmages could hope to unravel the secrets behind the spell’s inner workings.

“... and... how was it?”

The cat took his time in strutting around the area to just sit back down on his pillow before he answered.

“Ah, yes it’s fine.”

“It’s... fine?”

“What? Did you expect me to sing your praises for correcting a basic tier 3 rune boy? Don’t get ahead of yourself, this was only the beginning!”

Roland wanted to do nothing more than to go over to where the cat was and drop a slice of cheese on his face. Regretfully in this exchange, he had more to lose if he angered the cat. His general spell knowledge was meager so he was unsure of what he should start with.

“The beginning? Wait, I did what you asked me for, wouldn’t it be time for you to return the favor?”

This didn’t mean that he would not try to gain more knowledge out of it.

“Oh? Did you finish with the material that I sent you over?”

“Yes, It filled up some holes in my knowledge but most of it was quite basic.”

Roland shrugged as through the years of self-study and experimentation he gained his own way of thinking. While the runic books covered some bases they didn’t go into too much beyond what he already knew.

Most of what the books focused were on disclosing the schematics and didn’t go too much into detail about why. The books mostly divided runes into larger chunks of runic schematics that were then put together like puzzle pieces.

This was very similar to his old approach where he just mapped out all the runic components that acted similar to circuit board components. The only difference was that the books didn’t do a good job at dividing everything up which then limited the uses.

“Quite basic you say? Those are strong words for someone that knows little about the mysteries of runes.”

The cat replied while his tail danced around back and forth.

“Alas you have risen to the challenge, you probably won’t disclose how you managed to achieve this while being at your level?”

Roland just shrugged as he did not want to discuss his debugging skill. This was a clear give and take relationship and he didn’t think that the cat would disclose all of its secrets if he asked for them either.

“I figured as much. If you wish I can send you some theorem about the inner workings of the runes... but did you have something specific in mind?”

There it was, his chance to make a move.

“Yes, actually... I’ve been having some trouble with my golem research, I could use any materials that you might have about the way that runic golems are constructed...”

“Runic golems?”

The professor, who was a cat, asked.

“Yes... is there a problem?”

“No, but I expected you to be at least a bit different than those bearded buffoons. I guess you are still a runesmith and they only have those clunky contraptions on their mind.”

“Is that so...”

He wasn't really sure how to reply to the cat's rant. To him, golems and their variations that could be made were quite intriguing. What kid didn't once dream about having a robot do their biddings? The golems were quite similar to their modern-day counterparts but they actually worked.

"Fine, I'll send a gale to you but I'll have you look over some schematics."

"That's fine, I'll correct them if I can..."

"If you can? Does your little secret skill have some limits, Mr. Wayland?"

Roland didn't reply as he wasn't sure himself. The only time that his skill had failed him was when he looked over the runic bank card. If the card was a tier 3 rune or a tier 4 rune he had no idea of knowing.

"I'll take your silence as a yes... Interesting."

The cat started grinning for some reason while nodding.

"Very well, this will be all for today!"

Soon they said their goodbyes and Roland was left in his own bedroom to ponder. He was sure that what the cat sent him to alter would become increasingly harder. But, this was all fine as it would only aid him in discovering his own limits.

While he was unable to make tier 3 runes himself he was gathering important research materials for later. The components that these tier 3 runes were composed of were similar in some spots while totally different in others.

There were some findings that he made after working on this first one. For once it seemed that the rune had one base rune that acted as the core. The stacking effect would be multiplied from it as the other stacks had similar base patterns which then added more changes.

Roland knew that he could probably map the tier 3 runes out just as he did with the common and lesser ones. The biggest problem here was as always, the inside spell structure that made the whole rune work.

If he didn't understand that he would not be better than all the other Runesmiths that just copied runes over from old books. He wanted to be able to customize them to his own wishes only then he felt like he would be able to call himself a proper Runesmith.

'The gale should arrive tomorrow.'

He rubbed his chin while sitting down, luckily his cat friend did things with haste. The new tier 3 rune schematic would probably arrive early in the morning. With it, he would receive some insights into golems.

Roland made a mental recap of what he needed to do. First on his agenda was finally creating his first prototype golem. Then the creation of the store would be next, along with hiring more people.

The thought of buying up more of the land around his house had also sprung into his mind. While he left some of the empty unkempt fields out of the picture, he might be able to use them.

If he managed to fashion golems then next in line would be automation. Having a small factory building with golems and machines that could create basic weapons might not be that far off.

'The more I think about it, the workload just increases...'

With a sigh, he went to bed. While his dream of becoming a business owner was somewhat already in motion it wasn't the end. On his mind were many ways of improvement and innovation, just how much could he build up this runic workshop?

Could it reach the heights of some companies that spread through the kingdom? Maybe it could even go beyond that and he could become a household name on the whole continent?

'I'm getting ahead of myself, one step at a time.'

"Good night, Agni."

A certain Ruby Wolf gave out a woof while laying next to his bed. Soon the two fell into a deep slumber, one dreaming of being a baron of runes while the other's mind was filled with pesky squirrels.