

Runesmith 151

[Chapter 151 Fired.](#)

“That’s it, bring it over here.”

“Alright!”

The shuffling of feet was heard along with the shouts of grown men. About ten workers were moving various construction materials consisting mostly of red bricks. Roland was to the side looking at the people that he had hired for the construction of his own store.

At first, he was thinking about building a wooden building from simple logs and planks. Then after discussing it with Bernir he went for a more stable solution. A building from bricks was a lot sturdier and could be reinforced from the inside with some runic magic.

While the bricks could not be inscribed with runes directly there were other methods that other various magical stores used. The easiest way as always would be to line the place with thin metal and inscribe runes on it.

He could also use runic scrolls and then there would be the third method where a person could use special magical paint. This paint would be able to hold a runic charge for a bit but was a lot more costly than a regular runic scroll.

Before he came up with the defensive measures of this store there were other things that he needed to worry about. The first one was to actually build it and then fill it up with his wares.

While the technology in this world was far below his old one, the building process was actually quite speedy. With the help of various skills and magic to help the craftsmen, everything went smooth.

The high-level carpenters would not need things like measuring tapes nor indicators to tell them if they were cutting in the right spot. They could tell if what they were doing was equally placed with just a glance. Thus the process of laying bricks and cutting them was increased severalfold.

The alchemical equivalents of cement and plaster were also here. They were actually better than their modern counterparts as they dried faster and didn’t require things like heavy concrete mixers to bind.

This was all thanks to the field of earth magic which allowed these builders to use specialized techniques. They had a certain magical tool that would cause the bonding mixture to harden when it was used. This tool used mana fluid to run and the one that these men were using had runic inscriptions.

Roland was quick to scribble down the runic patterns and components for future use. He knew that he was stealing costly company secrets in doing this but it would allow him to fix things around here without the help of the construction company if anything ever broke. He still needed the alchemical mixture to pair with it, so the newly gained tool might not even be usable.

“Mr. Wayland.”

While thinking about the new shop he noticed a familiar person call out to him. It was a human youth of about eighteen years. The young man had blond hair that was styled into a bob and had quite the blue eyes.

“Claus? Isn’t the shipment of runic items due in a week?”

“Yes sir, I didn’t come for that, the guild sent me to deliver this letter to you.”

He was handed a letter that had a seal on it. With one look he knew that it was a special seal that if not removed correctly would cause the letter to go up in flames. After the item was given Claus nodded at Roland and made his way out of there.

His eyes were clearly glued to the muscular construction workers that were bringing materials out of their spatial backpacks.

“Wasn’t that Claus, but we should still have a week...”

“I know, he brought a letter over, can you look over the workers.”

“Aye boss, I’ll be sure to watch them like a hawk, if they try to steal something Agni will bite their dicks off!”

Roland looked to Agni that gave out a happy bark.

“Please stop teaching him strange things...”

Roland shook his head and returned to his room. There he used a simple technique on the letter to dissolve the seal. These types of letters could be attuned to a person’s mana fingerprint.

Such a fingerprint was given to the guild as he was signing the contract with them. Through it, they could keep in contact through these types of sealed letters. Why they decided to contact him in such a way was somewhat odd, this meant that something had happened.

‘Greeting Wayland, we need to talk about something so come to the guild today at sundown.’

Roland narrowed his eyes while looking at the piece of paper. He examined the back to see if there was something else but he couldn’t detect anything.

‘Did he have to use such an elaborate thing to contact me?’

It was strange for the guild master to go out of his way to present him with a letter like this. He could have easily told the delivery boy to tell him. What was this secrecy for? He didn’t know but after reading the letter the magical ink on it turned red and it burst up in flames before him.

‘That guild master has always had a screw loose...’

While Roland didn’t want to go, he was obliged to visit the guild and talk with the guild master. He was still a tier 3 class holder and a person that was backing him. Thanks to the guild standing behind him he had a convenient shield that protected him from outside forces.

The interactions that he had with him were a bit peculiar. He could never really figure out what the man wanted as sometimes he acted very relaxed but on other occasions he had violent outbursts to real everyone in. Still, he was someone in a higher position in this city and in the guild through which he was making most of his money.

Thus he waited for the construction workers to be done for the day before heading into the city. The day was kind of murky and the clouds indicated that soon it would be raining. He was lucky enough to make it into the guild before it started raining.

The guild was filled to the brim with shouting men and women as always. While in the beginning, he disliked these types of displays with time Roland had grown accustomed to it.

He much preferred these sort of rowdy individuals to the nobles. The adventurer types laid out their emotions before themselves while the nobles were more reserved and scheming. The latter were hard to read and a person had to always worry about what they were saying.

Offending a noble could be the end of a person's long career, while on the other hand, the adventurers preferred to let their fists do the talking. He sometimes saw two men going at it over some silly dispute to only be drinking buddies the next day after knocking each other's teeth out.

Luckily in this world healing magic extended to teeth and thus people could let loose their pent-up aggression without things holding them back. Even the adventurers that he took out his rage on, had their bones healed up within a day's time.

"Afternoon Mr. Wayland, you'll have to wait a moment as the guild master is busy with a previous engagement."

Roland was greeted by Elodia who was as professional as ever. Without Armand and Lobelia being there she did not really have anyone to rage at.

"That's fine, I'll just wait inside."

The guild was already known to him and he was under a contract. Thanks to this he could use some of the inside rooms without being kicked out. Thus he went inside and the loud noises of the adventurers were left behind as he decided to sit out in the corridor. There he could just wait till the people that were talking with the guild master went out and know when he could enter.

This didn't take that long as he could hear some movement at the staircase. The people that came out weren't anyone that he knew but he could feel a somewhat extensive mana signature from one of the people. This was quite odd as the person was a dwarf that weren't known for having lots of mana.

There were two of them, even without looking at their stats Roland could tell that they were competent craftsmen. This didn't keep him from using his analyzing skill to try to figure out their identities. Seeing dwarves at the guild while their feud with him was underway was slightly alarming.

Name:

Bamur L122

Classes:

T1 Mage L25

T1 Blacksmith L25

T1 Mana Scribe L25

T2 EnchantSmith 47

Name:

Dunan L131

Classes:

T1 Blacksmith L25

T1 Miner L25

T2 Armorsmith L50

T2 Weaponsmith 31

While the person called Dunan didn't really have any classes that were out of the ordinary, the other dwarf was different. This was the first time he laid his eyes on a proper EnchantSmith and this one was actually at quite the high level.

The analyzing skill worked less on people that were above his level so this was the most information he could get out of them. Luckily for him, they were not wearing any magical items that hid their classes from view. They would not be able to inspect him which would make his Runesmith Lord Class hidden.

The EnchantSmith progression was very similar to the Runesmith progression. One became a mana scribe first along with having to be a blacksmith and mage. Then the person had to learn specific skills during the mana scribe phase and enchant items as a blacksmith. Then the tier 2 option would become available.

Normally dwarves preferred to go with the Runesmith Tier 2 option as it was an all-around better class. There were some requirements from the base stats which put a wall that was not easily breached.

With the high requirements only about one from four people could actually achieve the runesmith class. This made EnchantSmiths a lot more prevalent around the world. It was also easier to learn and easier to progress without having much outside knowledge.

Thus Runesmiths were somewhat worshiped in the dwarven circles. But, while they loved their own runesmiths they despised any other race that achieved this status without their approval. Their whole identity was based on crafting when someone came around that could affect this they mostly reacted in the way they were doing it now.

Roland could feel the looks of the two dwarves on him. At first he thought they would start frowning and staring daggers but instead, they seemed to be in a good mood. When they passed him he could have sworn that one of them gave out a chuckle.

The two strutted outside while he stood up and headed up the stairs into the guild master's office. It was clear that the two dwarves that he passed belonged to the union in the city. It seemed that this strange visit that he was summoned to would be somewhat interesting.

"It's me, Wayland."

He knocked on the door and quickly heard the guild master's voice.

“Come in.”

On the inside, he took up his usual spot and could notice that something was off. On the guild master’s desk, there were some torn-up papers. At first, he wasn’t sure but then he quickly realized that what he was looking at was the contract that he had signed with the guild.

The contract didn’t really put much strain on the guild, they could fire him without losing much. This was all due to him receiving the knowledge required for the runic smelter he was using now. They would have to pay a small fee but it didn’t look like the guild master cared about that fact.

“I see that you have given into the Union’s demands?”

Wayland asked while standing up, it looked like this conversation wouldn’t take long and he wasn’t really interested in hearing some kind of long-winded explanations from this man. At this point in his life, he felt like he would be fine.

The dwarves could try but his skill set was far too rare to be halted by their little tricks. But, while he was somewhat sure that he could sell his wares, the problem of getting the right materials arose. Before he could think about that conundrum the guild master called out to him.

“This doesn’t matter, just sit down and listen.”

Aurdhan quickly shouted while tossing the torn-up contract to the side.

“This is just meaningless paper, it’s not how relations between people are built. This shit is just for people that lack integrity and I don’t think you are someone that lacks that.”

Roland sat back down but the confusion from his face didn’t vanish. The contract was torn apart and the guild was obviously cutting ties with him. What was with this strange talk of integrity?

“You probably realized that the dwarves are a stubborn bunch. They would rather go bankrupt than let an outsider dabble in what they think is part of their traditions. ”

Roland just nodded as it seemed that the dwarves were a bunch that didn’t think only in profits. There was more money to be made if they cooperated with him. If his wares were in their stores more people would come to buy them and they could even share their magical technology with each other.

“I’m not really sure where you are going with this...”

Roland answered as the guild master was kind of getting off-topic. Time was money so Roland didn’t really want to listen to some bullshit explanation by this man that made his decision to cut ties just in some way.

“I see that you are eager to go home and continue your work, but do you think it will be that easy?”

“What do you mean?”

“Do you think that your runic wares are enough to get you through this? Will it be that easy?”

“Why wouldn’t they? Even if you don’t help me, I can still sell at the auction house...”

“At the auction house? Have you even tried to do that recently? You underestimate the union.”

Roland had to stop and think. Some time had passed since his last visit to the auction house, if the union had enough pull there they would probably be able to ban him from selling there. That would only leave him with either peddling out in the streets or attracting people to his new store.

"I'll be fine, I'll figure something out."

"I'm sure you will but what I'm trying to say is, that you don't have to."

Roland perked up at the words as the guild master for some reason wanted to continue their relationship.

"You want to continue helping me under the Union's nose?"

"Something like that, let me explain, sit down, this could take a while..."

While he wasn't sure what to make of it, Roland decided to listen to the guild master's offer. Aurdhan explained the reason for the termination first. The other craftsmen were having a hard time making a living and it would be an uphill battle that devoured a lot of coin if they wanted to go against the union's deep coffers.

He couldn't really blame the other craftsmen for thinking that he was the problem. Before he came along everything was fine. He would also probably be able to survive even if the union was against him but he would have to sell his wares less openly. This was also where this conversation seemed to be going.

"You want me to do what?"

"I'll have to sign a contract, this will keep me from giving you aid openly but... there are other ways of earning money."

Aurdhan gave a devilish grin as he just gave Roland a somewhat unethical proposition.

"Before I sign it, I can get you in touch with some of my contacts, through them you will be able to purchase what you need and most importantly sell."

The talk was about the black market. It was a whole different entity than what the dwarven union and the merchants were running. It was something hidden and if there was something you could offer, they would take it.

"Why are you doing this? You could easily wipe your sleeve clean of all of this and be done with it, why go against the dwarves like this?"

He asked as he wasn't sure if he could trust this man. What if these contacts that he was talking about were some plot to get him in trouble with the law. The black market was the black market for a reason. If the ruling power in the area caught him, he would be in a heap of trouble.

"Why go against them? Because I am greedy!"

Aurdhan spoke up with pride as if there was nothing wrong with that statement.

“I don’t like when things are taken from me, I would enjoy nothing more than to see those shitty dwarves eat shit. I also know a good investment when I see one, you have a bright future ahead of you but it’s not going to be easy.

Roland wasn’t really sure where this trust came from but this deal gave him a way out of this mess. He knew what Aurdhan was going for here, he wanted to still keep him on good terms while appeasing the dwarven union. The old man was clearly trying to play on two fronts, if he would take his side if this all came out remained to be seen.

“So what will it be? Wayland, we don’t have much time, after I sign the contract my hands will be tied.”

Roland looked at the guild master’s large hand that he was holding out towards him. It was clear that this would only be an agreement between two men. It would depend on their character if there weren’t any ulterior motives.

Thus a big decision needed to be made. Would he cut his ties with the guild and try to do everything on his own. Or would he try using Aurdhan’s contacts to soften the blow from losing his suppliers.

[Chapter 152 Shady business.](#)

A loud sound of a door getting slammed could be heard. This loud thud was followed by the rumbling of footsteps that were coming down the stairs.

“Mr. Wayland is everything okay?”

Elodia that was about to head over to the guild master’s office was the first to notice to whom these loud footsteps belonged to. She could see a rather mad-looking young man rushing down the stairs.

“Ms. Elodia?”

He stopped for a moment to look at her but then just as quickly decided to move past. It was clear to her that he was in no mood to talk.

“Everything is fine, you don’t need to concern yourself with me.”

Before she could figure out what this was all about, Wayland stormed out of the guild. She was left to wonder about the look on his face. The young Runesmith had a somewhat grumpy expression devoid of a smile by default but this one was a bit more serious.

She moved up the stairs to the guild master’s office as she was tasked to bring over some papers. It seemed that Aurdhan wanted her to write up a contract and bring it over to one of the scribes for magical imprinting. While she could write up the proper papers in a legally binding way, she didn’t have the proper class to create a magical contract.

“Guild master?”

“Elodia? Just come in and lock the door behind you.”

She entered the office and the first thing that she noticed was a lot of torn-up papers on the floor. Out of habit, she started picking up these papers to only notice that they concerned a certain runesmith.

“These are...”

“Oh, that? You can burn them, we won’t be needing those anymore. But that’s not why I asked you to come here, I need you to do your bureaucratic magic.”

She wanted to ask the reason why these torn-up papers were there. It didn’t really take much for her to figure out why she saw Wayland being so mad. The guild master had clearly broken his ties with him for some reason and this reason was soon revealed to her.

“What would you like me to do, guild master?”

Elodia posed her question and she quickly got a response. The theme would be the dwarven union and the contract would forbid their involvement with a certain runesmith. It appeared that Aurdhan had bent the knee to the union and decided to cut his ties with Wayland, at least when crafting was concerned.

What it all came down to was an agreement between both the union and the guild. The dwarves would stop using their connection to force the prices down and allow their guild-run stores to operate normally. They would even be tasked to supply them with some magical weapons and armor.

“Sir... Do you really want me to fashion a contract like this... I think Mr. Wayland has been working fine with the guild...”

“Elodia, you are a good worker but this does not concern you, just do your job and stop asking questions, were you always this chatty?”

She was quickly shut down by the burly man in front of her and had to move her head down. Ever since the Armand debacle, she felt like the work environment had become tenser.

Why she even asked about the reason was a bit odd. This was not something she would have done before, at least not if it didn’t concern someone from her own foster family. With all the information in her notebook, she returned to the floor below.

There she needed to find the guild’s mana scribe that would fashion the contract. The sun had gone down already which meant that she would be stuck explaining the final details of the contract for quite some time.

The guild master wanted to have it by the next day, which meant that she would probably need to come in earlier than usual to continue the work. These sorts of papers weren’t done in an hour and she also needed to run it through another advisor to see if she didn’t make any mistakes.

‘Why do I put up with this...’

She gave out a long sigh before wandering into one of the side rooms. Inside she found her co-worker buried in some papers which soon would increase.

While Elodia was stuck with more overtime Roland was on his way back home. He had a lot to think about as the guild master brought up some concerning things.

He was sure that he would be able to sustain his home by his own volition. He had convinced himself that his runic items were just too good to not be bought up by the adventurers. Even if the dwarven union came for him, he could match their prices as he was the one building everything.

Then his worldview was shattered as Aurdhan had mentioned that he would not be able to use the auction house. This was his main strategy if things went wrong, using the establishment that had previously brought him money.

But apparently, the dwarves were already working on banning him from participating in the auctions. The only realistic way to go about this would be to hire someone to buy and sell for him. The biggest problem with that was trust.

He would need to find a trustworthy merchant that would work with him. If he was on the dwarven hit list, almost all of the good merchants would ignore his plea of help. They were still out there to make profits and angering the union would only make things troublesome. This only left inexperienced merchants or ones with shady backgrounds.

Due to Roland's networking skills, he had gained no real business partners. The only thing that he ever did was to give his wares over to the auction house or hand Bernir them to do it for him. There were no good deals or people in high places that were looking out for him.

The guild was supposed to do it but they buckled under the pressure at the first sight of the problem. This just showed him that if he ever wanted to get something done, he would need to do it himself. While the guild master offered him a way out, he was not sure if he was willing to go through with it yet.

'Not like I won't have anything to eat but I've already started to build the store...'

While he could still earn his keep as a silver grade adventurer, he had already put other things in motion. The contract with the construction firm was signed and the construction of his new store building was not going to be cheap.

Without money, he would need to halt his golem construction. Golems required an astonishing amount of resources and time. The little magical robot that he made wouldn't really be of use for anything. It could only move around and be a mild annoyance and without figuring out golem software he wouldn't be able to program in more actions.

If he relied only on his adventurer income it would force him to spend most of his days in the dungeon. This would force him to lower his time as a runesmith. It would be hard to compete with the other craftsmen if he wasn't able to produce enough stock.

'Should I really trust that baldy?'

He looked down onto a piece of paper. It was another one of those letters, he was given it by the guild master along with instructions. Roland was given a way of getting in contact with some 'friends' that would help him out with his material problem.

For now, he decided to place this letter in his spatial bag for safekeeping. Soon he would need to make a decision as he was already running low on funds. On the next day, he was to go back to the guild and take his earnings from this month. This would be the end of his relationship with the guild stores, at least the open one.

If he took the guild master's advice and if it worked out well, he would be somewhat indebted to him. Before he gave him any more credit he would need to find out if his claims were correct. Bernir would

also give him some advice, he was the person that always went to the market, maybe he could point out someone that could work with them.

Finally, he returned home to give his only worker the bad news. Bernir didn't react in kind to the way the union was treating them and this was magnified by his history of being ostracised from his own community for being only half-dwarf.

"Damn bastards, who do they think they are? Let's go over to them and blast a couple of grenades through their windows boss! I know a good spot, they won't know what hit them!"

"Calm down Bernir, if we do that we'll just end up in prison..."

While he wished to do nothing more than lob a few runic bombs into the dwarven shops, this would clearly cause him to go under in a day. If he wasn't caught by the guards at the shops he would probably be quickly given a wanted poster. There were too many ways to apprehend people in this world and he was not the stealthy type.

"But what will we do? If we can't buy any crafting materials will we go out of business? Are you going to move to another city?"

The easiest way to get around this would be to move elsewhere. The biggest problem with that option was that he would need to build himself up from scratch again. Even then it could not pan out without signing off with a bigger company for support. The union could easily ban them from the next auction house they move to and he could go back to square one.

"First calm down, it's getting late, we will go to town tomorrow and see how bad it really is. You have some people that you know, I need you to ask around if there would be any merchants willing to supply us with materials like deep steel."

Roland decided to try working out an agreement with some merchants. On the dawn of the other day, he and Bernir parted ways as they began their search for a business partner. Just as he had suspected though, no one was willing to hear them out.

He quickly realized the power of networking and how he should have been actively participating in it. Roland went out of his way to avoid interaction with other people due to his trust issues. If he actually showed himself to be someone trustworthy he might have not been in this predicament.

"How was it on your end?"

Roland asked Bernir, who just shook his head.

"Those bastards work fast, every merchant that saw me averted their eyes. It's clear that they have all been paid off or are too afraid to offend the union."

While Roland could probably do business with the merchants if there was anything else than metals and smithing involved, the union held a chokehold on the entire kingdom when his craft was involved. With most of the mines and smithies occupied by them, no one else was willing to go out of their way to go against them.

They didn't just give up on the first day. Roland and Bernir continued going through the city, though the half-dwarf did most of the work as his boss quickly found out that he didn't really know anyone in the

city. The only people that he really talked to were the adventurers and the guild already showed that they wouldn't be working with him.

Just like the guild master had told him, when he went over to the auction house he was given a long-winded explanation of why he was not allowed to sell anything there. He was considering trying to hide his face and sneaking in to sell some wares.

But there weren't that many runic items going around. The people from the auction house could force him to reveal his face or use some identification. He was sure that the dwarves made sure to increase the examination requirements on any runic wares coming from unidentified people.

Roland even tried visiting the stores that he used to work with. One of them was where Dyana worked. Even though the woman showed interest in him before she was now looking out for herself.

"I'm sorry Wayland, this isn't anything personal but unless you can give me a better deal I'm stuck here."

Not like he didn't understand where she was coming from. It was either to work with the dwarves that had all the money in the world or try helping him out with no real incentive to be had.

"But if you ever need some help with other things, don't be a stranger. They only told us not to sell your wares, they never said we can't trade in other services. If it's anything besides a runic item, I could probably sneak it in."

She gave him a little wink before sending him on his way. While he wouldn't be able to sell anything in their stores that gave his involvement away. He could still hand in other items, which would actually give Bernir an outlet to place his armors in.

This wouldn't fix the issue that he was battling now. Regular armors and weapons didn't sell for that much. They were mostly used by low-level adventurers, the real money was always in magical items and gear.

After a few days of not really making any progress, Roland was stuck with a backlog of runic swords and daggers. They had already been delivered for runecrafting and due to him already finishing the order he was unable to return it. The guild informed him that due to the deal with the dwarves they would not be able to sell them.

With that, his only real revenue stream that he could gain good money from was repairing runic equipment. He was still the only runesmith in town and could handle the orders at his home. The word was slowly spreading and neither the guild nor the union could stop the adventurers from coming over for his services.

Even though he could take a lot of money for the repairs this wouldn't fix the problem. The items that he was fixing were already rare and not like they broke down every month and needed constant repairs.

Roland stayed up late the night and while going through some of the golem research the guild master's letter caught his eye. If he did nothing about this predicament he worried that he would be run out of town. He invested far too much time into his home and now store to just roll over and take it from the union like this.

While he might have been able to survive in the short term. There could come a time when the union brings over their own runesmith. Then they could easily price him out of his repairing services, maybe even run some kind of smearing campaign to undermine his future runic creations.

This was a critical moment in his life. The city was about to go through another gold rush. More and more adventurers were arriving and everyone was expanding. If he didn't follow the trend he would remain stagnant. Now was the time to act and to seize his future, if he did not he might as well sign a contract with the dwarven union and be done with it.

'The black market, huh?'

He glanced at the letter and knew what it entailed. While he was apprehensive to work with the people that would be the first ones to rob him blind, he knew that they would not hold the union in many regards. They were profitters first that didn't really align themselves with anyone or anything.

On the other hand, it was a good chance to see how the criminal underbelly in this world looked like. He already knew that most successful people somewhat rubbed shoulders with the thieves guild and ignoring them could come biting him in the behind later on in his life...