

Runesmith 157

[Chapter 157 Runic Emporium.](#)

“There, will you get off my back now?”

“Aye, dis will do.”

A certain large, bald guild master was frowning while looking at a smaller dwarf. Both of them didn't seem to like each other but they were in the process of signing a contract. The two dwarves were the same that Roland had seen a few days ago and they were now looking over some signed documents.

“Good, now stop price gouging my stores.”

“Ye don't need tae worry, dwarves aye follow a contract!”

Aurdhan gave out a snort while watching the two bearded men leave his office. He glanced at the written contracts one more time before remembering a certain runesmith that he once employed.

‘The kid should be fine.’

His eyes soon turned to a different kind of parchment. It looked somewhat strange as the paper was black as coal while the writing was white instead.

‘Seems he had a little run-in with the locals though...’

“Guild master, can I come in?”

Without answering back Aurdhan glanced at the piece of paper. In a matter of seconds, it went up in flames after he injected a tiny bit of his own mana.

“Come in.”

A certain young woman with glasses and her hair up walked into the room. Aurdhan nodded at her while handing her the contract that he signed with the dwarves. It would have to be stored down in the vault together with all the other contracts the guild had made.

“You can leave now, that will be all.”

He noticed that this guild receptionist had been taking interest in this whole case. Even now he noticed that she took a longer glance at the piece of paper. This was somewhat out of character as she was normally somewhat more professional.

‘Is there something going on between those two... well not like it matters?’

Aurdhan pulled out an empty piece of paper. This little shop enterprise that he created might have gone under but this didn't mean that the work was done. Even though he wouldn't be able to undercut the dwarven magic items he still had other venues he could profit from.

Then there still was the dark horse, Wayland the Runesmith. It seemed that he had followed through with his advice and would be remaining in the city even with the dwarven resistance.

Aurdhan knew how those drunks operated and they would certainly not get involved with the black market merchants. From his perspective both the regular market and black market were the same thing, one just had fewer restrictions.

'Time to get back to work...'

While the guild master was busy with his own business Bamur and Dunan were walking back to their workshop. The two were quite happy about how they managed to handle the issue with the runesmith.

Thinking that the young human had no right to delve into something their ancestors were known for was enough to justify the actions that they took.

"That shuid dae it."

Dunan said to Bamur while walking through the large iron door of their headquarters. The moment they entered they could feel the heat going up. Inside were various other dwarven craftsmen hammering away at various metals, shaping them into swords and axes.

"Dae ye think that 'uman wull come tae us?"

"If he does, we'll juist send him awa', we don't need him around 'ere."

Dunan replied to Bamur and the two soon went on their own way. While the two had the highest levels from the smiths here, they were still young craftsmen with a lot of pride.

This debacle had already taken away from their own work and now with it being done, they wanted to concentrate on their own craft. Thus the two delved into their own private workshops that were dug into this large building.

Dwarves liked to operate underground while being surrounded by heavy machinery and heat. The sound of hammers was like music to them and being intoxicated while working was just part of the course.

A day turned into a week and then a month had passed, this was the time for their monthly meeting to discuss how the Albrook project was underway.

"Kin we git this ower, a'm needin' tae finish that set o' arms."

Dunan said in a grumpy voice while the group of dwarves sat down around a table. While he looked a bit annoyed the others weren't saying much.

"Whit's wrong wiyh ye, did yer mums die or something?"

"Na, we juist hud word about th' 'uman runesmith, he is actually expanding 'n' building a shop, it doesn't look he is struggling at all."

One of the dwarves that was responsible for gathering information spoke up. Dunan was the last one to come to the meeting so he was not informed about this information. From the reports that they were given the human runesmith was close to finishing building his workshop.

"Impossible, did he hae more coin than we anticipated? building a damn shop 'n' stocking it up shouldn't be this easy, did th' guild lie tae us? ur thay aye helping him git by?"

Dunan asked while the other dwarf shrugged.

“We checked, it doesn’t seem lik’ he is getting hulf fae other sources.”

The dwarves didn’t just let this slide, the moment they noticed that Wayland was doing fine they investigated. Their informants stated that neither Wayland nor his assistant was getting anything from the marketplace. The people that they knew like the other shop owners were not helping them either, he was getting his resources from an unknown place.

“Either someone is providing him th’ metal or he is usin` some auld stock tae git by, ah say we hold `n’ see...”

Bamur spoke out this time around. Knowing well that it would be hard to compete with runic items with a runesmith he didn’t see a way of pricing him out of business.

While he could go for the lower-level adventurers, the ones with a lot of money would not skimp out on good gear. Their lives were on the line and they knew that paying a bit more was better than being dead.

There was also the perception of price to quality that was attributed to magical weapons that Bamur knew existed. If he lowered the prices of his enchanted items people would think that there was something wrong with them. Thus before acting, they decided to wait, more information was needed.

....

“Hm... they sure do work fast in this world...”

Roland stood before the new building that had been created in a bit over a month’s time. It looked like a nice small brick cottage with a slanted roof that made it look like a pointy triangle. There was a large round window on the upper floor where the attic was at. This place was now empty and still required furniture that would be arriving soon.

He wasn’t sure what he would do with the attic that could be accessed by an extendable ladder. The space up there had enough room for someone to sleep or it could serve as a storage facility.

The store was built into the wall that was going around Roland’s house. It wasn’t that far from the main gate and behind it was an additional storage where most of the goods would be placed.

The plan was to place the less costly items up on the display while the good stuff was placed in the back. This would keep people from touching dangerous runic weapons that could blast a hole through his store.

“Well, there she is, what a beaut.”

“She?”

Roland looked to Bernir that eyes were sparkling. It seemed that his assistant was happier than even he was that this store had been built. While Roland was somewhat happy that he could make this, it was just the beginning of his journey.

For him, it wasn't really about building a store and more about being free. This store and company that he was trying to create was in place so that he could be independent of others. His true wish was just to someday relax without feeling the impending doom coming from all directions.

"Aye, you come up with a name for it yet?"

"Name huh?"

Roland looked at the spot above the large wooden entrance door. There he saw nothing besides the brick wall, soon he would need to place a sign that would give the people an idea about what was inside.

He also intended to put a sign at the road where the adventurers were heading towards the dungeon. It would point them in the direction of this store with the promise of high-quality runic items.

These items would range all the way from weapons to his mapping orb that he also intended to sell for a hefty sum. With some work on the orb's inner workings, he hoped to include a smart mapping system that would work somewhat like a GPS.

With a lack of satellites though he needed to figure out a different way of keeping track of the person holding it. Maybe in the future, he could build some kind of tower that gathered some signals and helped him map the whole dungeon but that would need to wait.

"How about we just call it the runic shop?"

"Eh? That's a bit too simple, shouldn't it be something grand like the Godly Runeforge?"

"Runeforge? It's not a forge, it's just a store for runic items..."

Roland went back and forth with Bernir as his assistant was resolute in giving the store a good name. Roland on the other hand didn't want to be too cheeky with the naming sense as it might give the customers the wrong idea.

There was still a need for something catchy that would bring the people over with an idea in their head that they would be getting some high-quality runic items.

"I guess... 'Wayland's Runic Emporium?' should do the trick..."

After going through the shops in this city and the others he noticed that everyone seemed to put their name in front of it. With that in mind, he decided on something that would encompass a larger range of runic wares than just armor and weapons.

"Emporium?"

"I know, it's somewhat small to be called an Emporium but didn't you say that I should think big?"

Roland gave Bernir a pat on the shoulder while heading out of the store. It had a large reinforced door that was hard to close due to its weight.

"Now comes the hard part..."

There was still some time before this place became ready to receive customers. First, it needed to be furnished and he needed to place something shiny behind those reinforced windows that could take a gunshot.

Then the next important part would be getting the right people to work here. He was slowly running low on funds but he was able to sell some protective trinkets down at the black market.

Due to his moral compass, he didn't feel like selling deadly daggers would be the correct way of proceeding there. The black market was there to help him get the base materials for his wares but not for him to fold it with weapons meant for killing.

Instead, he chose to buy some cheap items from the goldsmith and place some barrier runes on them. While they wouldn't last much, they would be able to protect the water from a few sword strikes.

"Okay boss, I'll go get the sign done."

"Thanks, I'll head to the city."

"Take care."

Bernir and Roland parted ways, Agni was left behind to chomp on more mana stones while also training his mana skills. With how the ruby wolf was doing it wouldn't be long before he could advance to a tier 2 stage.

What Roland was setting out to do today was to find some help for the store. Elodia was still someone that he would like to hire but he didn't really have time to pay her another visit. Today would be the end of the deadline.

If she didn't want the position Roland would be forced to place a job offer and try to hire someone adequate for the position of the shop clerk. Elodia was a good pick for him as he hoped that she could take on tasks that required more than looking good and being able to sell.

He needed someone to take care of the books and also hire other staff members. Her responsibilities would be more in line with a manager status than an actual seller. In his hand, he had two pieces of paper, one a job offer for a shop clerk while the other for a guard.

While he was pushing on with his golem initiative it was far from being perfect. He needed more time before he could place metallic protectors around his land. Thus the best option was to hire some adventurers as they did take on boring tasks like this and didn't require as much payment as professional guards.

There was also something that was a requirement to have a successful business, advertising. He knew very well that if a person was fed through the day they would sometimes develop a craving for that advertised item. While there was no internet or TV in this world, there were banners and signs.

Most of the people in this world didn't really know the proper way to advertise. They usually just placed signs outside of their store and picked names associated with the items they sold in their stores. Outside of this, they sometimes placed one person outside of the shop to shout at the people passing by.

This was something that he also intended to do. The way to the dungeon was free of pesky taxations so he could place a nice large sign pointing towards his home and store. Then hiring a good girl to point the adventurers in the right direction would seal the deal.

His name was already known so he just needed to embed it in his customers further. Whenever they thought about magical items, he wanted them to think about him and his store.

'First thing first though...'

He looked at the adventurer guild that he was standing in front of and slowly entered. Inside he could see a plethora of people going back and forth. There he saw his favorite guild receptionist that he used to mostly avoid in the beginning. Now on the other hand he much preferred going through her side as it went by much faster.

As always there was a little line that he needed to go through. This was something that he was already used to so he just waited without making much of a fuss. Then before it was his turn a little scene unfolded.

"Hey can't you give me a better price? These mana stones should sell for at least a few more coppers."

"Sir, as I've explained. The prices of mana stones have gone down this month if you look at the price board..."

It seemed that she was trying to explain to an adventurer that the rates for mana stones were down. This was a normal occurrence as they tended to fluctuate through the month. They had been on a somewhat decline the more adventurer parties formed but not by so much that they couldn't bring in a livable wage.

While normally Elodia was somewhat stone-faced without any emotion during such matters, today she looked a bit more annoyed. With his now sharpened senses he noticed her eyebrows twitching a bit as the man continued to lean in and talk. Hygiene wasn't that great here so Roland could only imagine how bad the man's breath was.

She didn't break character though and after some back and forth the old adventurer decided to take his money and go. He didn't look happy and he displayed it by spitting to the side on the floor.

It was finally his turn but before he got there he saw a woman in the same receptionist getup as Elodia approach her from the back. The two started to whisper between each other and the other girl seemed somewhat apologetic for some reason. This was followed by more eyebrow twitches from Elodia as she turned to face him.

"Ah Mr. Wayland, how can I help you today?"

While she was holding it back Roland could tell that she was angry. He didn't really feel like it was his place to ask her about her daily life so he decided to go with what he rehearsed earlier today.

"Um, yes. Did you think about my offer Ms. Elodia? It's still open, it would be..."

Before he could continue and list some perks of being his employee, Elodia decided to slam her hands on the counter and look at him with wide eyes.

“I accept!”

“And I could offer you a free... huh, you accept?”

He was baffled by her reply and this was noticed by some other people in the guild. Mostly her co-workers looked at her in astonishment with wide eyes. It seemed that Roland had gotten his second worker, now together with Bernir he would have two people to command!

[Chapter 158 Foggy future.](#)

‘Was that really the right decision...’

Elodia was standing outside of the adventurer guild. She wanted to hit her head against the wall after recalling what had happened not so long ago.

After having spent a whole day dealing with pesky adventurers that just didn’t understand how the prices of mana stones could change she was tired. Then a co-worker appeared out of nowhere asking her to stay a couple of hours more as she had something ‘important’ to take care of.

Elodia knew well that this was untrue and that the girl would be down at the local tavern having fun with her friends. This has not been the first time but Elodia always needed the money so she didn’t care much about the excuses. That is until a better deal arrived at her doorstep.

‘Why did I have to agree when everyone was watching...!’

She grabbed her hair while looking down on the ground while not knowing what got into her. The moment he walked over to her counter she had lost it. All the stress from this work that had been building up caused her to lose her composure for the faintest of moments.

So then she took him up on the offer while everyone watched. It would be hard to go back on her statement. The people from the guild had been there along with Solana that heard it all.

“Ms. Elodia, is everything alright?”

A manly voice that should not belong to a seventeen-year-old called out to her. There he was, the handsome Runesmith that was on the helm of her current troubles. While the offer that he was giving her was quite good she wasn’t sure if the man could deliver on the promises.

Elodia was quite aware of the debacle that he was going through with the dwarven union. In her opinion, the best move for him would be to either leave the city or find some common ground with the dwarves. No news of him ever attempting any diplomatic resolution ever reached the guild so it seemed that Wayland was quite stubborn just as the dwarves that he was going up against.

“Oh, I’m fine Mr. Wayland, glad that you waited for me to finish.”

“That’s fine, I understand that making such a decision wouldn’t be easy. I’m glad that you have decided to take me up on my offer, we can write up a proper contract in a few days, that is if you are fine with it?”

She spaced out for a moment as Wayland continued to talk. Things seemed that they were advancing rapidly and that was not something that she liked. Elodia wasn’t very prone to taking risks and while

working for an aspiring runesmith could be lucrative, a steady job at the adventurer's guild was much safer.

"Ah yes, the contract ..." She paused a little bit as contracts were kind of a specialty. There was a possibility of getting a good deal but she didn't think Wayland would go through the trouble of signing a one-sided contract that favored her.

"Great, I've already got one ready, I'll give you a copy tomorrow. Then I'll be counting on you from now Ms. Elodia."

Soon Wayland was off to go somewhere while Elodia was left standing beside the street. It was the first time that she said no to a co-worker that was now stuck working the longer hours. The shock on the young girl's face was something new that she was not used to. While thinking about her own future she returned home to the orphanage.

As always it was quite loud and the kids were playing with some other young adults that came over from time to time. Lobelia and Armand had their own cliques that they tended to hang out with and these two were people that the half-elf knew.

"Renny, Jasper, thank you for keeping the children company."

While she was grateful that there was some outside help, Elodia wasn't so sure about these two young men. They seemed somewhat sketchy but Lobelia vouched for their morals so she let it be. She could only hope that they wouldn't go down a bad road while taking a couple of her children along with them.

"Leave it to us Elodia!"

"I hope you weren't teaching them anything strange though..."

Elodia glanced at something that looked like a lockpick in Jasper's hand. The young man quickly moved it into his pocket while whistling.

"Don't worry big sis, I'll keep them in line!"

"I hope, for your sake..."

Elodia narrowed her eyes while glancing at Lobelia. These two half-beastmen were proper adventurers but she did not have the opportunity to glance at their adventure cards. Sometimes they joined Armand and Lobelia during their dungeon runs but she knew that the two were only here due to her younger sister.

"Uh... hey, I heard about the big news, are you really quitting from the guild?"

Lobelia was quick to change the topic as she was getting cornered in a spot by Elodia. It seemed that rumors were already spreading. Her younger sister had always been good at gathering information; it was as if she was doing it for a living.

"Who told you that?"

“Oh, a little bird told me~. But isn’t it great? I think working for Wayland might be a great change of pace, you have been looking tired lately... just look at those bags under your eyes, you must start taking care of yourself!”

Elodia was taken aback by Lobelia’s reply. She didn’t seem to be aware of the problems that may arise by her leaving her steady post at the adventurer’s guild. Before she could bring that up, Lobelia walked over and gave her a big hug.

“Don’t worry about us or the kids, we can take care of ourselves, do what you want to do ... also stop being so stiff big sis!”

The two soon parted and it became quite loud as the kids zoomed in on the adults. The kid started chasing after Lobelia while laughing. Elodia could just smile and give it to her younger sister.

She still felt responsible for this whole house but the paycheck that Wayland was offering seemed enticing. Her only gripe was the uncertainty of him lasting in this hostile environment.

“Is it true, did that bastard really propose to you?”

“What are you talking about, are you drunk again?”

After half an hour Armand decided to show his face. It was dinner time and everyone was ready to dig in. Apparently, the muscle brain had heard some rumors about Wayland proposing to Elodia in the guild and her accepting in an instant.

“I did accept but it...”

“You did? This can’t be happening ... so it really was true... maybe if I get him when he isn’t wearing that blasted armor I can beat some sense into him...”

“Good luck with that, pea brain, I’d put my money on Wayland.”

“I second that.”

“Thirded.”

Renny and Jasper were still here while munching on some homemade stew. It seemed that for some reason they thought Wayland would not have much trouble in taking care of Armand.

“Why you little shits!”

“Calm down Armand, no one is getting married, Mr. Wayland just offered me a job at the new shop that he is making, nothing is set in stone and I haven’t left the guild yet!”

She had to slam her hand down on the table to break up a fight from happening. Most of the time when those two went against Armand the three ended up in a fight. The big brute always came up on top though so she was more worried about the two half-beast boys.

“Wouldn’t it be fine though?”

“Hm?”

“I’m just saying, would it be bad if you married Wayland”

“What are you even saying?”

Elodia replied to Lobelia that raised this question after finishing her meal.

“What would you want that bastard to...”

Armand raised his fist at Lobelia that just started whistling.

“What’s the problem? You do know that he is loaded, all of our problems would go out the window if big sis got together with him.”

Elodia smirked while looking at Lobelia that was at a loss for words. It looked like her little sister was mostly interested in Wayland’s monetary value and not really the person behind it.

“He isn’t bad looking, is tall and has money... hm maybe I should go for him if you aren’t interested~”

The half-elf grinned at Elodia showing off those pearly whites. It was clear that she raised this in a mocking tone but as soon as she did the two half-beast men jumped into the conversation.

“No, you mustn’t!”

“Ye, you can’t do that!”

Lobelia just gave out another sigh as the people in the room started to shout at each other again. It was clear to her that her younger sister should realize the feelings of these two boys before she ever thought about marrying anyone.

She had to worry about her own future though. Her younger sister for some reason thought it was a good idea to switch professions and that Wayland would be making a lot of money in the future.

People that could create magical items were said to be able to bring in a lot of money. But most of the time they ended up contractually obligated to large conglomerates like the dwarven union and forced like her to work long hours.

Maybe it wouldn’t be such a bad idea to sign up with someone like that, he certainly looked like he was driven by something.

For one reason or another, an image of a smiling Wayland with her and the kids popped into her head. She was making some food in a large house and a pricey ring adorned one of her fingers.

“What am I even thinking about?”

She quickly shook herself back to reality and looked over to Lobelia that was egging Armand and the other two men on.

“Stop shouting and help me clean, all of you!”

.....

‘Well, that went better than expected.’

Roland was back at his house and looking at a stack of papers. Since he had been employed several times and had other contracts to look through it wasn’t that hard to formulate his own.

People in this world worked a lot longer than in his previous one. No one really went with the eight-hour workday and free weekend variant here. People were lucky to even get one day off in a week.

Due to this the workforce was mostly populated by men while the women remained at home to take care of the kids. This made what Elodia was doing seem like madness as she was trying to be both the man of the house and also the mother.

Not like that was his problem, he had to focus on creating a good contract that would put too much strain on himself. Even though Elodia agreed at the moment he wasn't so sure if she was truly convinced yet. If the contract wasn't good enough he feared that she would go back to the guild.

"I don't really need to keep the store running for the whole week..."

Roland felt that the market for the runic weapons wasn't that large and that the adventurers would wait for the right product. He did not want to be stuck around his workshop for the entire week so closing for the weekend was something that he wanted to do.

In those two days, he could do other things like visit the dungeon to level up and gather more resources. With the store open he felt like he needed to remain close to the goods.

The first reason was for safety as he wasn't sure if anyone would come to cause trouble. He could see people like the dwarven union hiring thugs to go mess up his store. Bernir on the other hand said that the dwarves would probably not do something like that.

Surprisingly his race being money-hungry as it is, despised doing things in a non-business way. While they were fine with undercutting prices, buying out land and stores of their competition they would not hire people from the thieves guild.

Roland on the other hand was now working together with the black market merchants. He had even spoken with Lobelia and her two friends if there was a way to guarantee that his business would not be targeted by higher-level thieves.

The people that attacked his home while Bernir was home alone had not been part of this thieves' guild. They were apparently just passing by and wanted to escape before giving the guild in this town their cut.

There were actually some strange rules between these thieves. If a person from another thieves guild came to a city they would need to pay a few of their earnings to the guild in town. Of course, they could try to skip town but would be put on the blacklist and hunted down if they ever returned to the city the guild was placed in.

Not everyone agreed with the ways the thieves' guild did their things and a lot depended on their guild master. Thus some of the thieves liked to work alone or in small groups and were seen more like bandits.

To his surprise, Lobelia mentioned that there were some ways but it would cost quite a bit. The only real way of getting proper protection from the thieves' guild would be going and speaking with the guild master.

Due to how well that went with the other guild master Roland didn't feel like it would be good to go speak with one that was probably a tier 3 class holder and unhinged from any specific rules against killing.

Lobelia did give him a tip to go around this without having to involve the guild master. Though it might not work, it would be good to hire someone from the thieves' guild as protection.

They would be able to monitor what was happening in the guild and tell him if any jobs were posted to steal something from him. He was wondering if he should give some pocket change to the half-elf and maybe her two friends for that reason. Though he wasn't sure if he could trust any of them.

'Maybe while her big sister works here, Lobelia will be more inclined to help me out...'

With that thought, he looked at the plans of his shop. While it wasn't that big at the moment and not that many items would fit into it at the moment, there was room for expansion. He purposely placed it at the beginning of his fence so that he could build in more sections later.

This would of course depend on his monetary gain but he hoped to add more sections to create a large store. With enough space, he could place items by a specific category, armors in one part, weapons in another, magical runic bathtubs in the other. With enough time and money, he hoped to create a proper magical store that was similar to the one he worked back in Edelgard.

While he did live outside the city boundaries this didn't mean that he wouldn't need to pay any taxes. Just like anyone else in the city he would need to properly register his building.

This might have sounded like a long process that required a lot of paperwork but it didn't. There were no institutions that checked if the building was safe to work in and if there was a fire exit.

Here a business owner was only required to pay a flat sum each month that was proportional to the store size. Once per year, a person wouldn't be tasked to go over the items that were being sold and through the store's ledgers.

There was a requirement to keep records of what was being sold but it was not as detailed as it was back in his old world. While there was some leeway, most people were not crazy enough to try and cheap out on the kingdom. If it was found that a person was evading taxes and withholding information it was jail time or even death.

'I'm glad I have someone like Elodia to help me out with that part. Hope those pesky dwarves finally leave me alone, only time will tell.'

Roland gave out a sigh while returning to his planning, when he finally got Elodia to sign this new contract he could shove some responsibilities on her shoulders as his were already somewhat buckling under the stress.