

## Runesmith 167

### [Chapter 167 Time to mine.](#)

The experience popup sprung up to signal that the monster had been killed. This was one of the more handy functions of this game-like system this world had. It kept anyone on their toes until this message appeared and made playing dead virtually impossible for any living being in this world.

“That wasn’t that bad...”

Roland looked at the corpse of the Bladed Volcanic Xornotaurus that had been blown up from the inside. He decided to implement the old tactic that worked before when he was here with Robert.

The monster had a tough exterior that was even able to take a blast of concentrated magical energy. Swords or any kind of bladed weapons would probably bounce off its armored plates if the user didn’t have any proper skills.

The previous tactic worked before and it was not something that was difficult to reproduce. Thus he decided to implement his spider droids to disable the monster for a moment. The electricity had worked before and the monster did have a large mouth for easy bombing access.

He had gambled a bit on this fight as he couldn’t be sure if the same exact monster would appear here. The boss chamber on the 10th level was the type to randomize boss encounters but it wasn’t the only type of boss chamber.

This one for instance seemed to produce the same exact monster. This one was a level higher than the one that he faced all those years before. It wasn’t much stronger though and the shocking nets that were also made to resist fire had done what they were designed to do.

Even if the monster was somewhat different he expected to be able to utilize the drone nets. With some added earth magic to tangle his opponent’s feet, it was a basic plan of stopping his opponent in their tracks. If something went wrong he would then switch to plan B of using ranged spells from his armor.

He had various other weapons stashed in his golem along with a plethora of runic cards for a prolonged battle. Roland was glad that he was able to save up on ammunition as he wasn’t sure if these spider drones could be used again. Even without getting close to them, he could see that some were damaged.

“All units gather up.”

After giving the command he waited for the spider drones to detach themselves from the net. The sound of mechanical legs filled the room as only four of the six golems arrived at the destination. Two of them remained in place while flailing their limbs in odd directions. It was clear that they had suffered some damage while trying to hold the monster in place.

‘The support bolts held them in place but some of the joints have been damaged.’

Roland looked at one of the damaged golems that didn’t seem to be able to move. Before walking over to it, he noticed the victory chest with goodies appearing in the middle of the boss chamber. It was just like the last time and he would expect to receive something at tier 2.

For now he ignored the treasure box while walking over to the damaged golem. His creation was twitching on the ground while trying to fulfill what it was ordered to do. Without another command to ignore the previous one, it would continue to struggle for about a minute. Then after going through a couple of program loops it would time out and stop.

This was a safety feature to save up on the runic battery charge that was left. If he didn't code it right the magical machine would just continue to struggle until it ran out of power or it fulfilled its command.

Just as he had predicted the spider droid shut down after a while of struggling. Only then he decided to pick it up to examine the extent of the damages.

'The legs are bent out of shape, joints cracked... the support bolt was mostly ripped out along with the chassis, this one is going to need a lot of repairs.'

After a quick examination, Roland decided that it would take too much time to fix, there was a limit of how long he could be here. He was not sure if the secret chamber was the same as before nor if this boss chamber would respawn another sword-tailed dinosaur for him to kill.

From what he knew, he should have about a week until a chamber like this respawned a foe. This was a well-documented occurrence as most of the boss chambers worked the same between dungeons.

A monster like this that was over level 120 would take a minimum of a week to respawn. The time could be random but would not go over two weeks. With that in mind, he needed to get back before this monster appeared again. While it might be a good farming spot of treasures from boxes he could earn more just by mining the precious metals from the secret chamber.

"Agni, stop."

Roland took the damaged golem into one hand and was about to go towards the other damaged one. At that moment he noticed his tamed beast going for the dead monster in the middle.

\*I need that mana stone Agni, don't eat it.\*

Agni whined a bit while looking at the dead monster corps. While the mana stone was not out in the open with his innate mana ability Agni could sense where it truly was.

"Don't you give me those eyes, I need that mana stone."

Roland shouted from the side while tossing the two damaged spider drones into the spatial bag. The other four were also deposited there for safekeeping as for the next part of the dungeon he wouldn't need them.

The biggest reason that he didn't want to part with the monster's stone was aether alloys. The metals that he was going to unearth were of high quality. This could be boosted even higher with the right mana stone smelting process.

This was a stone from a boss monster so even if it was only a tier 2 stone, it still was above all the other ones he could find in the dungeon. It would be too much of a loss if he just had Agni eat up all of the best parts for his new creations.

After the golems were back in the bag he commenced the next part of the plan. His hand moved into the spatial bag and he pulled out a strange-looking tool. For people in this world, it looked like some strange long blade with spikes coming out. In reality, it was a runic chainsaw that he had prepared for this very day.

The runic chainsaw looked somewhat different from a regular tool from the modern world. The biggest difference was that it had no large motor or space for fuel like its counterparts. Instead, the handle wasn't as chunky as the ones that had to hold fuel in them.

This handle was constructed for holding it with both hands so as to not have the tool slip out during the process of cutting. As the cutting started it would pull the runic saw downward towards the item that was being cut. Roland implemented bumper spikes that were found in regular chainsaws to rest them against what was being cut.

Roland ditched the fuel system as he didn't need such a crutch to use this tool. His mana reserves were quite large thus he could just run it by himself. Previously the monster that was before him had to be left behind as there was no way of carrying the corpse outside, with the help of the runic chainsaw he was going to remedy that problem.

It was constructed like any chainsaw. The guide bar was rounder at the end, the chain went around it with the base being used for the chain ring. The inside mechanism that would normally be a motor either run by fuel or electricity could be replaced with runes.

With a small jolt from his mana, the chain ring began to slowly spin around. He continued to add more and more mana until he had it going nice and fast. The work thus started, the sound that this runic saw made caused Agni to shrink away and howl at it.

Roland wasn't aiming to get everything out of this monster's body. Its large tail that was shaped like a large sword would fetch a good price though. So would its organs like the heart, eyes, and even tongue. These were various ingredients in potions that could fetch a nice price.

With the help of his tool, he was able to get through the armored parts with a moderate amount of force. Even though the chain was spinning fast it still was a sluggish process to get through the monster's tough body. At the end, the chain would probably need to be replaced but thanks to this construction the rest of the tool would remain intact.

This wasn't the main reason that he was here though, he gave himself about half an hour of slicing before walking away. Even though the runic saw worked nicely it didn't protect people from being splashed with monster blood while cutting.

He had thought this far enough and while working used a lesser shield spell to surround his body with a thin layer of mana. This was enough to not be covered in the monster's innards as he cut its limbs apart.

To save on time, he decided to make the parts small enough to fit into his mule golem. Thus its tail, head legs, and claws made their way into the large spatial bag while the middle part was left behind. The only part that was worth it would be the heart and the mana stone which he also removed.

"You can go ahead Agni, that is if you still want to snack on that thing..."

Roland pointed to the mess that he made, the cut-up corpse of the boss monster still had a lot of meat to it. Agni looked at it for a moment and didn't seem interested after the mana stone was removed.

"You sure grew into a food critic."

Roland chuckled while going towards the leftover chest. He pointed with his finger towards it and a gentle light shot out towards the chest. It started glowing brightly with a few colors switching on the surface. In a few seconds, the colors became uniform and it remained red for the remainder of the spell.

"Red? ... is my great luck at work again?"

After seeing the color Roland grabbed the large war hammer that he didn't use for the fight. He quickly raised it up into the air and brought it down on the chest that appeared after the boss was killed. The moment his weapon connected with the treasure box he could hear a strange wail.

The monster's true appearance was revealed to him after it was smashed. This was quite the sneaky monster that was able to disguise itself as parts of the dungeon. Even with his identification skill, he was unable to distinguish it from a normal chest. Only when using a specialized spell to uncover traps was he able to ascertain the monster's true state.

This was a very rare occurrence, there was a small chance that the chest that would spawn would be booby-trapped. Then there was an even lower chance that it would spawn in as a mimic.

The monster would wait until the person was right next to it before opening up to devour them. It was a very dangerous enemy, even when poked by swords or pelted with arrows it remained stationary. It knew how to play the waiting game and would risk taking some hits before attacking.

Thus Roland decided to smash it with all his might with this impact hammer that he made. The increased weight on the downward swing was strong enough to take the being out with one hit. The message of receiving experience points came soon after and what remained was a chest with a huge tongue that was flopping out and massive teeth everywhere.

Agni jumped over the moment he realized that there was a monster there, the growling soon stopped though and was replaced by interest.

"No, you can't have this either"

What was left behind by the monster was another mana stone. Mimics were shapeshifters so their mana stones were somewhat larger than from other monsters that were at their level. Thus it would be a shame if his gluttonous wolf devoured this one as well.

"You can have the rest if you want though..."

After placing his hand in the strange-looking creature Roland pulled out a nice shiny gem. It was covered in some mucus but with some mana, he was able to burn it away from his gauntlets.

Agni just snorted at the dead creature as if he wasn't pleased with what his owner proposed. With the chest out of the way and the monster parts inside the mule golem, they both departed for the more important part of the expedition.

Like before there was a secret passage leading out of this chamber. Behind it would be the maze section with some traps that could be easily avoided by him. The golem that was slowly walking behind him was just small enough to fit through the narrowest of the corridors here.

Roland was sure to design him in such a way that he could fit through. At this point in time even if it did get stuck he would continue with the mining run. The golem would just be left closer to the boss room while he took the backpack himself but it would limit his gains.

This was the easiest part of the journey as no monsters roamed these corridors. The only thing he needed to watch out for were magical traps. One of the more annoying parts was getting Agni and the golem over the runic tiles that were trapped.

He found himself placing Agni on top of the golem and lifting it over his head while walking through this long corridor. While Agni had some skills to recognize traps he didn't want to risk his wolf tripping one of them along the way. After this part, it was smooth sailing and he arrived next to the secret entrance to the mine.

'I'm picking up some life signals.'

"Get ready Agni, there will be enemies inside."

Thanks to his built-in mapping feature he was able to scan the inside of the cavern. A couple of red dots appeared here and there but this wasn't anything that he wasn't expecting.

The moment the secret door was opened he and Agni rushed inside while leaving the golem back. Inside he discovered a couple of volcanic salamanders and red slug monsters that were giving out smoke.

They were all low-level creatures compared to him and Agni. At the bottom of tier 2, they stood no chance against Roland's magical spells that he was able to spam without any incantation. Even before Agni could sink his teeth into one of the salamanders it was frozen in place by Roland's modified frozen arrow spell.

He was able to combine a few features of other spells like a homing arrow. With it, in place the spell would chase after the monster's mana signature and react mid-flight. This saved him time on aiming as he could just spray the spells in the enemy's general direction.

It was more of a massacre than a fight as all the monsters that were here dropped dead within a couple of moments. With how they were all regular mobs Roland gave Agni a nod and the hungry wolf chowed down on the salamander flesh and mana stones.

"Good... it's all still here..."

The moment he entered he could already see the various colorful lights shining around them. There were various minerals radiating mana from them and other shiny metals stuck in the ground and ready for the taking.

"Agni, you are on guard duty, if any more of those monsters appear, be sure to take care of them!"

The Ruby Wolf perked up at the order and stopped eating the raw salamander. He was quick to finish eating and then started slowly moving around the chamber while looking for foes.

Roland on the other hand signaled the golem to move into the room. From inside of it he removed the four working spider droids along with two other ones that he had saved up for this occasion. With some fiddling, the golems were now equipped with something that looked like a drill on their fronts.

“It’s time to work, spread out, initiate routine 11B.”

While the smaller golems activated he removed a nice looking pickaxe from the storage as well. It was time to give his mining skills a try.

### [Chapter 168 Metals, metals everywhere.](#)

The sound of drilling along with metal colliding with rock filled the mostly empty cavern. To the side, a rather bored Mystical Ruby Wolf was munching on some volcanic salamander meat while looking at its master swinging a shiny pickaxe.

This was something that had been going on for quite some time. Roland did not sleep nor did he stop swinging his mining tool while collecting various of the costly minerals. There was no time to lose, he had no idea if he would be discovered or if someone would be waiting for him at the exit.

While he didn’t think that he was spotted, he could not be sure. People with heightened senses and abilities that even his new mapping system couldn’t detect were always a possibility. It wouldn’t be hard for people to camp out near the lake and wait for his return.

This was still not a very probable outcome. Unless someone was certain that there was money to be gained they wouldn’t go through with such a scheme. At most, they would post a lookout to trail him back home. Then they would decide if it was worth the trouble to attack the city runesmith.

Even though the dwarves had continued to mess around with him, he could not be easily countered. They too had limited means of combating his runic wares that he could produce at a fast pace.

Compared to regular Runesmith his runes were always masterfully crafted, even if another smith of the runes appeared in the city they would find it hard to compete with Roland when it came to crafting these magical symbols.

“Phew... I’ve gotten some nice loot this time around.”

Finally, after working for multiple hours Roland decided to put his pickaxe down. After going through this cavern a couple of times he had a good idea of what he was working with. The most prevalent ore that he found here was Durium.

Durium from the outside looked similar to iron ore but it had a characteristic dark blue sheen to it. It was much stronger than iron but this durability came at the cost of being somewhat brittle. Thus after some research, the people found a few ways to combine this extremely hard metal with other alloys and finally produced Durasteel.

Durasteel was mostly a combination of deep steel and durium with a sprinkle of other minerals. It could also be further refined into aether durasteel which would produce items that even platinum grade adventurers would not be ashamed to use.

This would probably be the next step in his life as a Runesmith. He would finally be able to shift his focus away from deep-steel weapons and armor. The amount of ore he was getting here would be enough to get him started.

The first move would be to improve all of his tools, smelter, and forge into the better durasteel variant. With it, in place, he would actually be able to handle the other rare metals that he was also finding here, one of them was Mithril.

He didn't find regular mithril in these caverns, instead, it was a fire-resistant variant that instead of a silvery coloring was quite crimson. Most miners referred to this ore as Volcanic Mithril due to how it was only found in places where there was lava.

This metal was even more resistant than durasteel and didn't need to be mixed with other minerals. Most tier 3 class holders came in contact with this fantasy metal and weapons made from them were a show of status among those circles.

It was one of the more prevalent high quality metals in this world. There were only two others Orichalcum and then Adamantium which was considered the strongest of them all. Both of them were even rarer and would rarely see the light of day.

Adamantium in particular was considered practically indestructible. There were some books on it that described quite the complex process of even working with this metal. A craftsman would at least have to have a set of orichalcum tools to put a dent in adamantium. Even with them, the heat that was required to make this metal workable reportedly caused the deaths of some of the craftsmen that attempted to mold it.

The craftsman would need to be of an extremely high level. They would also need to have all of their fire resistance skills leveled up to the highest degree. From what the records say, Roland imagined the craftsman being almost forced to be inside of a smoldering inferno themselves.

Then even if such an Adamantium weapon or armor was made, the process of enchanting it or putting runes would be even harder. He wasn't sure that even a tier 3 runesmith would be up to this task, a tier 4 class holder was more realistic.

The third metal that he was able to find again was Etherium. There were some sizable chunks that were ready to be unearthed and this would probably increase the value of his wares by quite a bit.

Etherium was a metal that was used by grand magicians for magic tower cores. They would store massive amounts of magical energy within them without suffering from any deterioration factors.

With the help of this mineral, he could produce runic weapons that would stand the test of time. By adding a bit of etherium into the durasteel mixture he would be able to boost its enchanting capabilities many times over.

In itself, durasteel wasn't much better than regular deepsteel when it came to runic deterioration. But when combined with some etherium it would reach its true potential and be something quite close to actual mythril.

Roland smirked a bit as he continued to think about the possibilities of using all these metals. Thanks to the dwarves he was unable to procure such metals, he was also short on funds as the black market merchants were unwilling to go below market value.

He knew what they were doing. The ores that they were selling were clearly stolen through various means. Either by open robbery or just by some greedy miners that sold some on the side.

Such materials would always be sold for much less than they would normally be worth on the market. Thus they should have gone for at least a bit less on the black market. But for him, the black market was the only option now and the greedy merchants knew it.

Now on the other hand, with all this he was mining here he might be able to pull in some merchants. Though the dwarven union was powerful there were still merchants that didn't see them as much of a threat. If he managed to produce high quality runic durasteel wares he would finally have something to bargain with.

Golems, runic weapons, and even magical scrolls. His portfolio was finally coming together and he reckoned that some of the more risk-taking merchants would finally be willing to do business with him.

While the Auction house in Albrook had been ignoring him it wasn't the same for other cities. He just needed to strike a deal with someone that would be willing to transport the durasteel wares out of the city. Other larger auction houses were unfazed by the dwarves, in which he would be able to sell even if he was blacklisted in other places.

'If the profits are high enough I could even go there myself, it would probably save me some money...'

Then there was option two, to just organize a little trip outside the city. There were larger gatherings of adventurers closer to the large super dungeon. There gold ranked adventures and ones above them weren't that rare.

Roland had been cooped up in this city for a few years now. This was mostly due to his paranoia of being robbed or attacked by cult members that he once faced. Now on the other hand his store was well protected.

Thanks to Lobelia and her friends he had access to the thieves guild. With them around, he would not have to worry about getting robbed when he was gone. The dwarven union had also not sent any assassins after him as he had previously feared. They really did most of their dealings through business.

There was a limit to what they would do and killing was clearly off the table. If they couldn't buy him out or price his store out of existence they would let it be. Roland could even imagine the little buggers coming over to strike a deal if he ever got wealthy enough. That is if they could ever look past him being a human Runesmith.

"These elokin's crystals will also fetch a nice price..."

The second mineral that was quite prevalent here was the crystallized form of elokin's fluid. It was quite similar to oil from the modern world that he came from. It would fetch a nice price on the market and thanks to his batteries he didn't really need it to power his golemic creations.



While his mind was filled with the new products he would be able to create with his new stash he looked to one of his spider droids. The little guys were drilling around some parts of the ground to loosen up the ores there.

The golems that he made were still only basic products that he hoped to improve. Even though they had the same mapping feature that he had, it was hard to implement the analyzing skill into their programming. Without it there, it was hard for them to distinguish between what they were looking at.

The only way to go around it was to give them spells similar to the one he used on the mimic chest. He could somewhat help them to distinguish between normal rocks and actual minerals. With the help of the drill attachments, he could somewhat speed up the excavation process.

While the golems were there, he used his armor to fully scan the whole area. After getting back home he would use this data to improve upon the spider drones. He hoped that after improving their systems they would be able to fully distinguish between the best parts and focus on them as now they were just randomly digging around some ores.

'I should get back to work.'

After the little break was over Roland resumed with the digging. While he could have manufactured a large drill for himself, with the armor on and his increased strength he didn't really need to. With heavy swings and a steady hand, he was already working like a machine.

'Hm, what's with this wall?'

While somewhat spacing out and going through the motions his pickaxe went into a part of the wall he was working on with too much ease. It was somewhat surprising as it felt that he had punctured through it.

When looking at his projected map he couldn't see anything past this part, no hidden tunnels or other caverns. The only two places leading out of this place were the one that he came through and the tunnel he entered together with Robert three years ago.

'This wall... it has a strange sound to it.'

He started tapping the rocks and noticed that there was something off. From the sounds, he was getting it felt like there was space behind it but his measuring devices told him otherwise.

Curious about what was going on he decided to pick up the pace and focus on this part. With a couple of swings, he was actually able to pierce his way through this section of the stone wall.

The hole that he dug up was about the size of his head and the first thing that he noticed was some light. There on the inside, he spotted strange glowing crystals that were illuminating the space he was seeing now.

'What is this? Another secret room inside of a secret room?'

This would be the third secret room in this section of the dungeon now. His interest peaked as this meant that there was another way to get into this room with all these resources. Maybe on the other side of this wall, there was some passage that led all the way to the large dungeon level.

'Strange... still can't see anything on the map.'

Roland glanced at the glowing stones that were in a couple of places. They were quite bright like light bulbs in crystal form. It was a peculiar sight as he didn't remember seeing such bright glowing crystals in any other parts of the dungeon. Even in the part, he was in, the glow was mostly due to the crystalized mana fluid giving of mana.

The walls were also somewhat strange, they didn't seem to fit with the inside of the cave he was in. The color of the rocks on the walls and ceiling was somewhat different. Then he glanced on the ground to spot another oddity, the ground actually had smooth tiles.

'This is clearly another room but...'

Roland was somewhat confused by the look of this secret corridor. He had been through many others like it but the ones in this dungeon kept the color scheme. They were all somewhat in the theme of this dungeon while this one looked like it didn't belong here.

Then there was the strange occurrence where he could not see this place showing up on his map. If he didn't vigorously swing his heavy pickaxe around he would have never discovered this secret spot.

While his brain was telling him to create a larger hole and investigate, his instincts told him to be careful before going inside this new area. The strange lights, the way that his sensors weren't picking up what was behind this wall, it all made him hesitate to just go inside.

'Hm?'

Then he heard a strange sound, it sounded like something was rattling around while getting closer. He still had limited visibility through the hole that he created but being curious he remained in place to look at what was coming.

In the distance, he noticed a shadow of something. It had a somewhat humanoid shape and was slowly moving in the distance. It seemed that this corridor went into a sharp corner from where those sounds were coming.

He already realized that it was probably some kind of monster. With that in mind he placed his pickaxe to the side. Even if it noticed him he would be able to reach into the hole with his hand to cast a few spells. What interested him more, was what kind of monster would pop out. His first thought would be a more advanced version of a flaming skeleton, probably a tier 2 skeleton soldier or something close.

He was right to assume that the humanoid creature would be of the skeletal variety due to the bone-rattling sound. The fact that it was a tier 3 monster was something that he didn't expect.

The monster was a lot bigger than the flaming skeletons or the soldier types that he saw around in this dungeon. It was even larger than he was and was clad in a set of heavy armor.

It was missing the boots for some reason which caused it to sound like a skeletal soldier instead. Its head was a constant inferno that produced flames that were almost reaching all up into the ceiling. In one hand it was holding a shield while in the other was a sword clad in flames.

Before Roland could take a closer look at this armor it was wearing it turned to face him. The sight of the monster looking his way caused Roland to quickly duck to the side. While he had gained some levels in the past few years, he was not close to battling a tier 3 monster.

'Shit, did it see me?'

He had spaced out for a moment and made a blunder. If the monster saw him, it would probably try to chase him down. Would he last the onslaught of a proper tier 3 being? Probably not, he needed to act fast and quickly remove himself from this area before the skeleton got to him.

Agni reacted quickly as it felt the distress that his owner was feeling. Both of them made some space between themselves and the hole in the wall. Roland now had a decision to make, should he abandon this area and hide in the secret corridor or should he fight the monster that could burst through that wall any minute.

His and Agni's safety was more important so he started to quickly back away towards the secret area but before going in he noticed that something was wrong. Even though the monster saw him for a fraction of a second it didn't seem that interested.

Normally he would hear a bone-chilling scream before the enemy attacked. They didn't hide their animosity for this long. The corridor also wasn't that long, the skeleton should have been able to close the gap in a couple of seconds. But nothing happened; it was as if the monster ignored him for some reason.

For safety, Roland decided to wait a bit more while being close to the secret exit. After about five minutes of waiting he could only scratch his head. But, after going through a couple of scenarios in his mind, he came to a conclusion.

"Wait... could it really be that?"

His mind was flooded with more questions as he started to realize something. If what he was thinking was actually true then what was behind that hole was a lot more precious than this chamber filled with costly minerals.