

Runesmith 169

[Chapter 169 Interesting discovery.](#)

“It really isn’t reacting...”

Roland mumbled to himself while looking through the hole in the wall that he made. On the other end, he could see a flaming skull looking his way. Soon this skeletal monster turned away as if it couldn’t see the human looking at it and then vanished back behind the corner.

He remained in place while looking at the shadows in the distance. This was not the only monster wandering this place. Other various sounds were heard from this direction and he even saw another skeletal enemy that was considered much more troublesome than even a Champion.

While a Skeleton Champion was a tough foe the magic counterparts were a lot more troublesome. They could summon many lower leveled skeletons without end to help them in their fight. Then while their small battalion of skeletons kept their enemies busy they would sling damaging spells from safety.

‘That one didn’t react either, now I’m sure...’

The undead type monsters were considered mostly just magically animated corpses that saw the world differently. They were quite sensitive to life and magical energy. If something like a lich couldn’t see him when he was standing there then there was only one explanation of what this was.

‘An entrance to another separate dungeon.’

This was a rarely seen phenomenon when two separate dungeons that had their own cores collided with each other. During his studies, Roland came across a book that described a few instances where this happened.

This supported the theory that the dungeons were divided into zones through which the monsters inside couldn’t pass through. Just like in this situation where the monster ignored the human on the other side even when being stared at directly.

The missing corridor on his minimap could be explained by the two dungeons interacting with each other. He theorized that the two sub-spaces collided with each other and might have been causing his detection devices to be erroneous.

What the monster here saw wasn’t the hole in the wall, it was just a wall. The skeleton and the Lich could not see past the border of their own dungeon. Unless Roland moved through the hole they would not react. He thought about throwing a rock at the monster for another test but gave up as he didn’t want to push his luck too much.

The small opening that he made would also mend itself back after some time. The dungeons seemed to have some pre-programmed venues and would repair the broken-down walls with time. This was why mining them was such a lucrative business. The tough part was just finding a room like this where the treasures were exposed.

“I’m not sure if I’m the luckiest man alive or the unluckiest one...”

Roland gave out a sigh while moving away from the dungeon entrance that he discovered. His drones were back at work and drilling into the ground as even with this discovery, he still intended to stick to the old plan. There were too many variables for him to just enter the new dungeon, plus the two monsters that he saw in there were far more dangerous than the lone boss that he faced before.

While he could profit immensely from this discovery, it could ruin him if the wrong people found out about this place. The room filled with precious metals was already a massive risk but now he found a doorway into a higher-ranked dungeon.

If he decided to sell this information to the adventurer's guild or the thieves guild he could probably earn a small mountain of gold. The earnings of the guild would increase dramatically through the tier 3 monsters and treasures that were probably within that dungeon.

That would probably be the smartest thing to do, as withholding information like this was considered against the law. The commoners didn't have permission to enter the dungeons before the adventure guild officially opened them up. Most of the time, the first dungeon clears would bring in higher rewards and some costly treasures would never be seen again.

Thousands of golden coins and high-quality materials were on the line here. If someone discovered that he was in possession of such information they would do anything to make him cough it up.

Even though he knew the danger, Roland thought that he should withhold this discovery for now. What he would gain for the information didn't outweigh what he could profit from this in the long run. He was looking at a gold mine of experience, one that he was the only one aware of.

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He knew that if he went to the adventurer guild they would take over this place. No one would be able to go inside without the proper papers, this including him. At this point in time, he was still only a silver rank adventurer as he never bothered to go through with his gold rank test.

This one wasn't as easy as the little battle with Armand. To pass it he would need to go to the guild again, first, they would re-evaluate his levels with another measuring device. It would be impossible for him to use his old tactic of hiding his class as he did before.

The gold adventurers dipped into the elites which made the tests more precise. He would need to at least reveal that he had the Runesmith Lord class during the examination. Then if he passed the guild would send him out into another guild to pass the test.

This was a somewhat strange tradition of sending adventurers to other cities on long journeys. They would be given some standard gold rank quests to fulfill along with a time limit. Most of the time a worker from the guild would be assigned to the party and travel with them like a shadow. He would remain hidden during their tests and grade their performance from a distance.

This role was mostly given to other adventurers that were over the golden rank or retired ones that worked at the guild. Some magical items were given to these testers to keep them from harm.

These guild members would not be held accountable if the person taking the test died. Their job was to watch from afar and grade their performance. If they got themselves into trouble that they could not handle, then it was their fault.

He was a busy man, there was no time to go on long journeys to other cities. At least not while his business was expanding at a fast rate. Adventuring was just a means to an end for him to get his shop running. His true skills remained in crafting and runes.

That didn't mean that he wasn't interested in a deep down this rabbit hole here. His levels have been stagnating lately, the only good experience that he received was from monsters over his level like the boss he faced or by making complicated tier 3 rune schematics.

After creating a runic spider drone like this he would gain a lot but it was only for the first one. When creating copies or ones that only had small changes his experience would decrease dramatically. This was also the reason why craftsmen initially leveled up fast but with the years they started to stagnate if they didn't innovate.

"This was unexpected, what should I do now..."

Roland looked at Agni, who was somewhat interested in the hole in the wall. After going through a few things through his head he decided to perform a little test before covering up the hole.

Without having good means to go against the monsters inside, it was better to return home and come up with a plan of action first. The resources that he was gathering would allow him to increase his power. He would also need to research the best ways of combating undead beings like a Lich, without the use of divine spells that priests used.

They were a troublesome bunch as they didn't feel any pain and had unlimited stamina. A normal monster would still react or back away when sustaining some damage. These bony adversaries on the other hand would chase after their opponent even if they had to hop on one leg.

Normally they could be burned to ash by magic but he was facing the volcanic undead. Without a tier 3 freeze spell, he feared that he wouldn't be able to put them on ice as easily as their tier 2 counterparts.

With that in mind, he decided to see if he could map out the area behind the hole. For this small expedition, he would need to sacrifice one of his spider drones. After signaling one of them to come over he went down to remove a couple of the attachments.

The drone would not need the drill or the net that he used for the boss chamber. It was best to take out what he could use later as he didn't expect for his creation to come back. Instead, he inserted a backup mapping device that still looked like an iron ball into the drone. After connecting it to the main runic program he hoped to boost the drone's sensors.

"Okay drone number 3, initiate manual override."

The drone's golem eye gave out a weak signal before its many spider legs moved into the default standing position. In this manual mode he could pilot his golem-like a remote-controlled toy car.

He had actually gone ahead and created a little game-like controller. It was almost identical to the ones that he used back in his modern world. He had done it mostly out of curiosity but also as a product that he might be able to sell to nobles. They would probably fork up a large sum of gold for toys and he reckoned that controlling a golem with a controller was more interesting than giving it voiced orders.

After fiddling with the golem cores and getting more knowledge about the golemic eyes he was also able to produce a crude image. The resolution was quite low but he was able to get a somewhat low-res depiction of what the golem was looking at. With more time he expected to refine this technology to align more with the modern time high definition cameras.

There was also the main issue of him not being able to view the image in real-time. He was able to receive the signal but it took a while for his runic system to render the scene. Then he also needed to use a special device that was sitting back at his home to view it. With his current armor, he could at most bring up the holographic map that showed him the basic shapes.

Now it was time to check the insides of the other dungeon out. The droid was placed by him directly inside of this hole only after he was sure that there weren't any monsters around. Only then did he step away and implement his controller.

The droid sprung to life and moved forward slowly. Its legs had special runes that allowed it to attract itself to the ground it was walking on. Thus he decided to cling to the ceiling for now.

'The map is working now.'

As the small golem wandered through the threshold of the other dungeon the mapping feature was restored and he could see further in. There he saw many long corridors that went on for a bit and something that looked like a larger area. The range of his map was somewhat limited but it was enough to show him the general layout.

'Isn't the super dungeon a maze type with many levels?'

From what Roland knew, that main dungeon on this large island was considered a maze. It was composed of many corridors that varied in size. While it was mostly a volcanic dungeon there were large areas that were different from the rest. Wide-open ones like in this Albrook dungeon and some even reported large bodies of water that were deep underground.

Albrook wasn't the only city that had a lesser dungeon like the one he was in. But considering that there weren't any other dungeons in the vicinity the most logical explanation was that this was the super dungeon. In some reports that he read, the researchers stated that the super dungeon could very well have already spread through the whole island they were living in.

Finding this opening could confirm some of the claims as Albrook was somewhat far away from the main large volcano in the middle of these lands. It was still not that close to the sea which could mean that the super dungeon still had some place to grow.

'Looks good but without the feed from the main golem eye I won't really know what is in there...'

The minimap didn't really say much as the whole place looked like one of the dungeon levels above. What lay waiting on the inside was unknown; he could only order the droid to move closer to that larger room. Soon it disappeared behind the corner to where the Skeleton Champion wandered towards.

His luck was good that day as he didn't see any red dots on the map. Without being given a clear image of what he was doing he could only look at lines of code that the golem was giving him.

There was information about what it was seeing there but it would be extremely hard to use it to formulate a good tactic. He started feeling like a certain hero from a movie that he watched that spent some time looking at green code. It wasn't as easy as they made it out to be as he could barely decipher if something was in the way of the droid he was staring at.

The small golems journey continued as Roland increased the pace by dropping down to the ground. With no enemies on the map, it seemed like the better choice than wandering on the ceiling and bumping into stalactites.

But then as he was about to go around the last corner a red dot flashed for a moment on the screen. The signal went dead almost instantly as that dot appeared and it was clear that the golem went down in one shot.

'Shit, what was that?'

Roland clicked his tongue as the golem was just about to walk into the large chamber. He wanted to at least see what was in there. Instead, his creation was destroyed by some unknown entity inside that could have been any of the undead creatures that he saw previously.

There was also a surprisingly loud sound following the destruction of the spider droid. It didn't sound like anything that he was familiar with but probably belonged to some kind of strange monster. Without any reason to keep this hole open, he decided to plug it up for now. The wall would mend itself back to its original state but he still didn't want to see tier 3 monsters wandering on the other side.

Roland soon got back to work, with the loss of one droid he would be able to get as many materials but that didn't bother him in the least. There was enough here to last him for a while, when he returned a new plan would unfold. One that would allow him to level up a lot faster than someone should be able to.

There were monsters that were a whole tier above him. Managing to kill one of them would allow him to gain a massive amount of experience. With them being stuck in another dungeon his escape route was assured. He could just waltz in, throw a few spells and quickly duck back into this cave if something went wrong.

This was something that he intended to use to further his strength even more. Before that he needed to improve his gear so that he was actually able to damage a tier 3 foe. Thus he increased his pace, his heart rate shot up and he felt something that wasn't usually there, a pinch of excitement.

[Chapter 170 Minor annoyance.](#)

"That will be enough."

Roland slung a large sledgehammer over his shoulder that he used to break up some rocks. After spending a few days in this cavern filled with precious metals his mining skill actually got some use and leveled up severalfold.

Having a crafting class allowed people to gain some gathering skills to a certain degree. The mining skill would allow him to spot weak spots in some of the rocks. It would also somewhat make his hits penetrate into the rocks, this, in turn, caused the rocks to shatter easier.

While he already had the basic mining skill this was the first time that it was properly leveled up. It seemed that when using better quality tools and mining rare materials it was leveling faster than usual.

After spending four days in this cavern he had managed to fill the golem up to the brim. This was not due to him managing to gain so many metals and minerals. It was mostly because he had to cut around the ores which increased the chunk sizes.

This meant that most of the items that he had mined were just simple rocks that would need to be properly treated. Luckily he had a proper assistant that could take care of such things and his wife was also a bonus worker that he was slowly opening up to.

Roland's shop had grown through the years. There were even situations of people walking up to him to ask for a job, though most of those quickly disappeared after hearing that the dwarven union was still not being favorable to him.

The spider bots didn't have much space to cram inside, but they would need to somehow get through this ride along with the tons of rocks and monster parts inside the large spatial bag. There were still some left over resources as they went deep into the ground.

"Awooo."

"Yes Agni, we are leaving now."

Agni started jumping around in joy the moment he noticed that Roland was slowly packing up the spider golems. The cavern was somewhat uninteresting to the tamed beast, only one more monster wandered into it through the lava pit which caused Agni to be bored through most of this mining expedition.

Before leaving Roland glanced over at the spot in the cavern that led into the other dungeon. While the metals would allow him to create better gear, his levels would still continue to increase slowly. Now on the other hand he saw a chance to fix that problem, he just needed to make some preparations before coming here again. Then maxing out his current lord class in one dungeon run wouldn't be that far-fetched.

With more hopes in his mind, he left this mining area and headed towards the boss chamber that he cleared out previously. The map didn't show any monster inside but this didn't mean that it would not appear.

He also knew that unless he opened the closed entrance door, the boss fight would not trigger. Thus for the time being he could relax while approaching the exit. Luck was on his side as the large boss chamber doors were wide open. This was a telltale sign that the boss monster did not respawn yet.

This was not the same for the monsters in front of the chamber as he spotted some strange-looking flaming mantis monsters there.

There were two of them just standing there while looking around. Roland knew that he could come closer and that they would not attack him. This was something of a rule in the dungeons as well, for some reason the boss chambers could not be entered by any monster from the outside.

Thanks to this strange rule he was now able to pelt these monsters with spells while they could not attack him. They went down rather quickly as at this point Roland's stats were already something that a

high level gold adventurer would have problems with. Any monster below the 100th level did not stand a chance.

With a couple of concentrated ice arrows, they were out of commission. Roland continued through the corridors as he did before but this time around Agni could aid him against the monsters here. Even though Roland was over-leveled for this section of the dungeon he still needed to be careful.

There were many hidden areas where he could be ambushed by monsters, some traps here and there. The only reason he was able to progress fast was thanks to his inbuilt map, through which he could see most of the hidden enemies. It showed him how much more good information was important as opposed to pure battling strength.

“Not far from home now Agni, let us take a small break, there are people above us...”

After about a day of walking, he arrived at the larger area with the exit section. He used more mana to widen his scanning range and thus he discovered some dots above. These were clearly people going through the laval lake.

“Woof.”

They both sat down on the ground while the mule golem slowly lumbered behind him. If Roland popped up now, the adventurers outside would surely discover him. His suit also came equipped with a working timer so he knew the best time to make a run for it.

Even though the dungeon didn't have a day and night cycle, people still adhered to it. The best moment to make his move would still be at about 1 am when everyone was already asleep. The adventurers that stayed here slept at this time too and camped out at a few well-known spots that were far away from this lava lake.

Without anything around him that he could fear Roland decided to remove his helmet. This new one had specialized latches and magnetic runes that would make it very hard to remove. Even if someone damaged the latch, the magnets would still make it stick to his head. After that one time where he revealed his face to his brother, he was not willing to make the same blunder.

Years had passed since and after establishing himself in the city of Albrook he started to feel more content in his own skin. The only real reason keeping him from seeking out his family was the perpetrator behind the assassination attempt. But this could have also been a false flag that he had forced himself into believing.

The air inside of this cave was not the best, hot with a smudge of sulfur. His helmet possessed a filtering feature that he could expand to a smaller area if he gave it some more mana.

Roland looked somewhat tired after spending almost a week down in this dungeon. His eyes were also somewhat strained, even though the sleeping resistance made him less sleepy it only elevated the symptoms of being sleep deprived. The longer he stayed like this, the worse he would feel.

While sitting and waiting he took out a canister with some water to drink and a bit of dried jerky. It was bearable to eat this but ever since Elodia showed up and gave him proper meals he was unsatisfied with these rations.

He wasn't sure what it was but the closer he got to his home, the more he thought about the girl working in the store instead. There was a lot of crafting to do, more weapons to build and more gold to be earned. But for some reason, spending time with that woman felt like the bigger prize here.

"Heh, maybe I've just gotten old..."

Roland smiled weakly while looking to Agni who raised his ears at the statement. Even though he looked like a twenty-year-old young man, he would be past forty if he counted the years from his old world.

Normally a person at his age would already be married and have a few kids. This was not something that he was against but it wasn't a realistic option for Roland here. At least not in the past, now after a long period of peace he wasn't sure if settling down was off the table anymore.

'I wonder if ol' pops would blow a gasket if he knew that one of his noble sons was together with a commoner...'

He wasn't sure what his father would do. Getting together with women that weren't of noble descent wasn't totally out of the picture. The only real rule was for the first wife to be a proper noble, no one really cared if the rest were concubines if an heir was already here.

This was the same for his family. The first wife was a daughter of a noble house while the second had been from a merchant that was more in line with the commoner heritage. The third wife was a mystery though, was she also a noble or some wench that he picked up along on the of the military expeditions.

When he was in the Arden estate he tried gathering some information but he couldn't find any about his mother's identity. It was as if the baron made sure that no one would figure out who she really was. There were no records of her lineage or any paintings left behind, just words and rumors that pointed to her being a commoner. If that was the truth, was anyone's guess.

Times started passing while he tried to focus on more productive things like thinking about improving the golem design. Many ideas floated about, mostly ones with a larger design that with the current resources would finally be possible.

'Agni, get ready.'

The Ruby Wolf perked up as Roland finally stood up from his spot. It was past 1 am at night and there hadn't been any movement above for quite some time. Finally, the moment of truth came as he grabbed the larger golem to make a run for it.

With his helmet back on Roland could scan the area for heat signatures. With it, he was able to exit at the right time when the lava lake cleared out. Just like before he grabbed the slow-moving mule golem and made a run for it. The only difference was that he instantly closed the entrance behind him.

With the new armor allowing him to run faster than before he was able to get to the shore even before the lake started closing. After leaving the golem down on the ground he continued to look around.

"Do you see anyone Agni?"

Without spotting any dots on his map he turned to Agni who had a tracking skill. The wolf started sniffing at the air for any current close by smells. While he was able to pick up the scents of many people, there didn't seem that there was anyone in the vicinity.

“Awooo.”

Agni gave out a howl before snorting with his nose as always to indicate the fact that he couldn't spot anything.

“Good, let's go, be vigilant we aren't out of the dungeon yet.”

Even though Roland was out of the mining area without being spotted, it was not the time to relax. At any moment a monster could poke its ugly head out, or a band of adventurer bandits could try to rob him blind.

This also seemed to be the case on this fateful day. When Roland left the area with the lava lake he came across some people. They didn't go unnoticed by him thanks to his radar but from the locations, they were occupying it looked like they were up to something.

There were five of them in total, two of them were blocking the path that he needed to take to leave the lower region of the dungeon. Three others were on high ground and probably armed with ranged weapons.

Something like this wasn't out of the ordinary. Some adventurers belonged to the thieves guild and from time to time would go to the dungeon to perform some bandit work. In a place like this, any crime could be attributed to the monsters living here. Any corps would vanish or could be tossed into lava if the perpetrators wanted to be sure.

Normally a person would try to go around such an obvious trap. Roland wasn't a normal person though and this radar of his had another handy built-in feature. It could somewhat measure the levels of the people within range. Thanks to this he knew that the people there were far below him when it came to strength.

There were three options for him here. First, he could just backtrack a bit and wait for them to go away. The second option would be to take a roundabout way to the exit that would increase the travel time by an hour or two. Then the last option was to go forward and just fight them.

“Agni, we have a couple of idiots waiting for us, be sure not to get hit by any of the arrows.”

Agni gave out a growl as he had also realized that there was someone waiting there behind the corner. Roland's actions might have looked foolhardy to other people but he calculated the risks taken here. From his point of view, these bandits would not fare any better than any monsters that he could meet at this dungeon.

“Halt! Don't take another step!”

The enemies shouted at him the moment he entered their trap. One of the three that was previously on higher elevation jumped down to cut off his escape route. Though when he discovered a large Mystical Ruby Wolf there he jumped back in fright.

“Are you sure you aren't over your head?”

“Shut up and give us all your money, and leave that thing behind!”

The person that seemed to be the leader was a large brutish looking man with more body hair than hair on his head. The other four looked like your typical party composed of mostly archers and warrior types. He even spotted a dual dagger rogue that was next to the leader.

All of them hovered around the eightieth level. This probably gave them enough confidence to pull something like this off. There were a lot of new tier 2 adventurers that wondered about these dungeons. The bandits here were probably waiting for one of the newbies to make the mistake of wandering out at night.

“Listen here, I’m tired so I’m going to overlook this, but you need to move out of the way.”

“Look at this bastard, I think he doesn’t realize what situation he is in boss.”

One of the bandits laughed while shouting at their leader. After getting closer to the five Roland’s minimap picked out another person a bit further behind them. This was probably a lookout that was there to signal if any other people came from the other side.

“Oh no, I know, here take a look at this...”

While just standing there Roland reached towards his belt where he had a satchel. This of course didn’t go unnoticed by one of the bandits that let loose his arrow. The man’s clearly fumbled out of stress as the other bandits seemed somewhat maddened by the attack.

The arrow flew right towards Roland’s head but he did not do anything to evade it. Instead, he continued to dig in his satchel for the item that he wanted to show to the bandits. At the same time as he found it the arrow collided with the magical barrier that was around his suit of armor.

The arrowhead bounced right off while the shaft bent out of shape before breaking into many wooden pieces. The realization of the magical shield made the bandits flinch but before the battle could continue Roland held out a large piece of gold.

“Wait, that is?”

“Yes, it is, will you let me pass now?”

This large oval coin had a special meaning. On it was the sign of the thieves guild and it was proof that he was part of the black market merchants. Most of the time it would be enough for the thieves to let him go.

Killing and robbing black market merchants was frowned upon by the guild as they produced a lot of gold. Without the merchants there the thieves would not have any means of selling their wares. It would make their lives a lot harder on both ends if the merchants ceased to exist so it was counteractive to hurt them.

“Boss, he is with the merchants, what do we do?”

“What do we do? Nothing, look at that armor, look at that strange golem, we can ditch this city!”

“Yeah, that guy must be rich!”

‘It’s going to be like this huh...’

Roland gave out a sigh before hiding the black merchant token back into his satchel. Sometimes people like this existed that didn't see that big picture. They would rather risk it all for a quick profit.

"Agni, you know what to do."

As the talks broke down the fight started. The large wolf that was behind the man in the shiny armor tossed itself at the enemy closest to it. The dungeon area was quickly filled with various sounds of explosions and people screaming for mercy...

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"We will be there shortly, my lord."

"Finally..."

A certain glamorous carriage with an emblem of a standing stag with a crown on its head slowly made its way towards a certain city. Around this carriage, there were quite a few armored knights in shiny armor. The sound of the hooves echoed through the whole area and made everyone that was close by to the large force that was coming this way.

The person inside of the carriage was holding a locket with a certain picture. After glancing at it he clutched it in his hand strongly.

"I will come back, just wait for me... this is just a small setback."

Soon he placed the locket back around his neck and hid it under his clothes. The moon shone brightly in the night sky which caused him to look at it.

"What was the name of this city... Albrook?"