

Runesmith 175

[Chapter 175 Is it getting hot in here?](#)

“Is he okay?”

“Hah, this is embarrassing, I thought he would be able to last until the very end...”

“It’s understandable, his level is lower than our...”

Roland was looking at a passed-out Bernir that was getting his head rubbed by his large wife. During the upgrading of the forge and smelter, he had hanged in there. Both Roland and Dyana’s levels were over a hundred while Bernir was trailing behind. Thus after working for several days he finally reached his limit.

“Don’t worry, I’ll take him home, he’ll be ready by tomorrow, I’ll be sure to drag his body back if he complains.”

“You don’t need to do that, I’m not in that much of a rush... if he feels under the weather he can take a break. It’s also the weekend so it’s fine.”

Dyana stood up while grabbing her passed-out hubby and slinging him over her shoulder. To this day Roland was surprised at the size difference between the two. He also could swear that the cow-girl had grown a bit through these past three years making the height gap even wider.

“Is it now? I can never get used to those ‘weekends’ of yours. You’re too soft on him, Wayland. In times like this, you need to push them harder otherwise he’ll get used to your goodwill.”

The large woman took the lifeless body of her husband away while leaving Roland alone in the workshop. From his perspective, he was only trying to be a good boss. Working his employees could backfire in the long run as he knew that burning out was a real issue.

Back in his world, he had a little taste of it as he was forced to work long hours with meager pay. It was just enough to fuel his lifestyle that consisted of living in a small apartment and having just enough for food and his gaming addiction.

In this world, it was normal for people to work the entire day and not even have any weekdays off. Most of the time the people just went to work, then drank themselves to sleep afterward.

‘Knowing Bernir he’ll probably do that, the moment he wakes up...’

While he worried slightly for his assistant, this was a somewhat different situation than his own world. Here there were skills that alleviate stress, sleep deprivation, and even fatigue. Bernir would probably be back to his old self after a good night’s rest, if not there were various potions that would get him back to his feet.

‘The forge is coming along nicely but what should I do about that noble?’

Roland gave out a sigh while looking at some of the parts that they had prepared for the new forge. The smelter they were using was really getting pushed to its maximum as cracks in its structure were beginning to form.

He had to actually aid the runic smelting process through his mana control to alleviate the damage it produced. The deep steel it was made off just wasn't resistant enough for prolonged usage.

Luckily it was somewhat holding out and they were mostly finished with the parts for the main forge. The forge differed from the old designs as it didn't require any fuel in the form of coal or wood. Everything was done through runic means.

Some parts were still created to mimic more modern-day furnaces. Instead of bowels, there was a runic air blower that he could activate by stepping onto a pedal with his foot. It would then blow oxygen-rich air at the flames to boost the heat even further. It was at a lesser mana cost than if he tried to directly increase the heat by adding more mana.

A new durasteel anvil was also in the works but it wasn't as important as the smelter and the forge. After the metal he was working was already heated up and softened, it could be worked on an anvil made from plain deepsteel. But after he was done with the upgrade he also intended to make a proper new anvil.

Through the implementation of runes, these tools didn't take up as much space as they would. The forge only needed to be able to heat up metals for him to pound on while the smelter needed to melt them down.

Thanks to mana he could do it without having to worry about any fuel compartments. Nor did he have to worry about much fumes being produced from the fuel. But that problem had been solved a long time ago through the use of a ventilation system.

Because he was now using a lot more mana he needed to expand his wind turbine farm even further. The backyard that was previously a minefield had been used up. Now it was filled with only wind turbines and a small empty section for some testing.

Luckily for Roland with the help of earth magic, it wasn't that hard to build down and to the sides of his land. A large testing area for the golems was built down below as he continued to drill into the earth below his house. By reinforcing everything with earth magic there was no worry of it ever collapsing. The walls were quite thick and could even take the force of an explosive rune without cracking.

There was also an unused plot of land that he had bought up near his house. Previously it was just barren farmland without any use now it had untapped potential. He wasn't sure what to place there, there were enough wind turbines to power his whole workshop so making another wind turbine farm there felt like a waste.

At first he thought that maybe when he figured his golemic creations out further he could make them produce items for him. Making a factory for some basics would be a good idea as he didn't really want to spend time crafting basic weapons.

Because of the prevalence of skills and a self-improvement mindset, the people in this world didn't think much of automation. Why would they leave the work up to a golem if they would gain experience and level up their skills while doing the same task? If the people on the top required more goods to be made, they just hired more craftsmen. With a long-lasting contract, they wouldn't lose much money and the leveling system made these people work almost as fast as modern-day machines.

On the other hand, Roland was kind of forced to go with the automation route. No one would really want to be hired by him when there were businesses run by the dwarven union there instead. Why would they trust the no-name runesmith with their monetary gains when there was a more trustworthy element there.

His mind wavered towards his own workshop but the noble named Arthur was on his mind as well. Ever since he appeared nothing had really changed. Life went on as it did before and from what he knew the noble had remained in his mansion since the speech that he witnessed.

“Would a decorative blade be a good gift?”

Roland picked up an old dagger that he had once made. It was made with his older technique which kept the mana stones on the outer structure of the blade. While it was somewhat inferior to the Aether metals it did look nicer. The mana stones would light up whenever they were used which would serve it better as a decorative piece.

“Or should I try investing more into our little lordling?”

After looking at a couple of old weapons he turned to one of the spider droids that he had made. It was one of the damaged units that he took back from his previous dungeon run. It wouldn't take that much time to repair as he just needed to replace the legs and smooth a couple of things out.

He could cover the scratches up with a new paint job quite well. The golem already had the basic operating system which would carry out voice commands from its master. While he couldn't program the new lord in as its new master, he could send it out with a control remote.

Most people called it a control rod in this world but he had made it look more like a TV remote instead. He simplified the design by writing in some symbols as the modern-day counterparts. It would come with an explanation of a scroll so that anyone would be able to use it without any help from him.

A golem or a regular runic weapon, he started looking between the two choices. With a heavy heart, he placed the golem down onto the workbench as it needed some more repairs. He realized that if he wanted to somehow stick out, the golem was the only choice.

While it pained him to give something like this up for free, it was needed to keep him in the noble's good graces. He did not know if his token of goodwill would be appreciated but if he didn't send anything over he was worried that it would put him in a bad light.

The dwarven union and the merchants probably already send in their gifts. If he didn't do the same he would just make himself look like one of the less ambitious people with no money.

‘Is this supposed to be something like networking? Feels more like an obvious bribe.’

Roland shook his head around while grabbing his tools. While the golem didn't require many repairs it needed to be somewhat stripped down. Leaving the weapons in the golem would probably not be a good idea.

He also needed to replace the battery that he used. For now, he would place a container for mana fluid into it instead. This was somehow a big problem for his future sales, the golem batteries that he was making.

In a sense, this was something that he was probably only aware of. If he was in his old world he would just patent the design and become instantly rich. Here on the other hand, there was nothing of the sort. It was a free for all and everyone could copy the designs if they were able to.

The batteries were a somewhat renewable source of energy. There was a limit to how many times they could be recharged and they lost some of their charges with each refill. Even with that, they were a lot cheaper than using mana fluid.

While he didn't think that many people would be able to copy his design, it was possible. The debugging skill that he was using wasn't the only skill in the world. There was a possibility that another runesmith could somehow figure out his manufacturing method.

Thus he was holding off by flooding the market with his golem designs. While this was a big reason it wasn't the main one, that was still his standing in the city. There was just no real place that he could market his golems to.

A golem came with a big price as a default. The time he invested in making them was immense so he would also not part with them for nothing in return. His store on the other hand was only visited by adventurers, these adventurers would not be able to afford something like a battle golem.

The costs of maintaining something like it would make most people cringe. It was easier to buy a tamed beast and level it up instead. That's why golems like this mostly saw use in very costly establishments like the bank that he was before.

Only rich merchants and nobles of status were able to afford them. Because of this, he saw it as an investment of sending this golem over to the noble. Maybe with some luck, he could entice him to buy a more battle-ready model which he could sell for an increased price.

'If only I wasn't banned from the auction house...'

While working another sigh escaped from his mouth as he thought about the auction house. That place was probably the only venue that attracted people that would be able to afford his golems.

The placement of his store was also working against him. Most rich merchants would not really bother to come all the way over when visiting the city. Not when he was constantly bad-mouthed by the Union and blacklisted by them.

The risks of working with him for them were too high. He didn't give up though, as his wares improved he hoped to attract someone with deep pockets that would push him into the next level. If not, then he still had the dungeon trove with precious metals that he could still sell off for a huge profit.

'Instead of a great runesmith, I'm becoming a great smuggler...'

A third sigh escaped from his mouth as he thought about the black market that he was stuck with. After the run-in with the bandits in the dungeon, it left a bad taste in his mouth. He could not trust those people, a lot of them didn't see the big picture as they just thought about fast income.

"Is everything alright?"

His mood didn't go unnoticed as a certain shop clerk walked over with a tray. On the tray, there were various sandwiches piled up that made Roland's mouth water.

“Oh, sorry didn’t hear you come in...”

Elodia just smiled while moving the tray with food right next to Roland’s face. The moment he looked down on the rather filled-out sandwiches he heard a rumble from his tummy.

“Dyana and Bernir left two hours ago, you should take a break, we wouldn’t want our ‘big boss’ to break down from overworking, now would we?”

Elodia smiled while mocking the way Bernir called him all the time. While it might have been a small joke she was right. If anything happened to Roland there three people would be out of a job with only Dyana having her own little forge in the city to go back to.

“Fine, I’ll take a break.”

Roland placed his hammer down next to the golem he was working on. Then he reached out for the tray with the good on but instead of grasping a nice chicken sandwich he grabbed nothing but air.

“Huh?”

He was puzzled by Elodia’s action of pulling back the food from him that she previously shoved into his face.

“You want to eat with those dirty hands?”

Roland glanced at his hands that Elodia was also staring at. These hands did not belong to a small boy anymore but to a man. They showed a history of hard work with the many calluses and thick skin that he had gained through constant work.

“Wait, you can’t deny a man his sandwich after all of that...”

Roland tried going for the food again but was denied access yet again as Elodia took a step back.

“No, wash your hands first!”

She just shook her head around while backing away, Roland on the other hand didn’t really want to go all the way back to his bathroom to do this.

“I see... but do I really need to wash my hands to eat that sandwich or is there another way?”

“Another way? What are you talking about?”

Asked Elodia while Roland was looking at something, this something was a nice clean looking hand that belonged to a woman.

“There is one person here that has clean hands...”

Elodia looked at her hand then back to Roland and after a little pause she figured out what he was alluding to. With a small blush on her face, she grabbed one of the sandwiches that she made and brought it over to Roland’s face. With food now in front of his face, he just chomped down taking in quite a bit with one bite.

It took him a bit to finish up as it was a somewhat awkward way of doing this. Still, the experience of having a cute girl feed you food was something to cherish.

‘Come to think of it, why is she still here?’

He asked himself while looking at the clock. It was quite late and it would be dark outside, normally when he was working Elodia would just go back to the city along with the shop guard and Agni. So when he managed to finish the sandwich he asked.

“Isn’t it late? Did you stay longer to make these for me?”

Elodia looked at the tray of food and then to the side. The previous faint blush that had been there became even more obvious. Without replying she turned around while walking away.

“W-well, Lobelia and Armand said they would be staying over so I thought we could...”

She started to trail off at the end with the sentence while slowly going towards the exit. Then as she vanished behind the door Roland realized what those words really meant. Thus a small dent in the floor appeared as he bolted for the exit.

“Agni, you’ll have to sleep outside... I’m going to be a bit busy...”

“Awooo?”

Soon after a confused Ruby Wolf was left outside of the house. From which he heard some rather peculiar sounds for the remainder of the night...

[Chapter 176 Happy days.](#)

‘She looks somewhat at peace.’

Roland looked to his right side where he saw Elodia’s head sticking out of the bedsheets. She had stayed over for the previous night and as it was a weekend they didn’t really need to get up early. The store closed at regular intervals after a short period of functioning just as he had promised in the contracts he made with his employees.

‘Now how do I do this...’

He stood before a difficult decision, how could he slip out of the dreaded spoon. Elodia’s head was resting on his arm while her back was pressed into his chest. Due to his sleeping resistance skill, he always woke up a lot faster than his new girlfriend. Thus it left him in a bit of a pickle whenever they did this.

Elodia might have looked small and weak compared to him but it was quite hard to pry her away from his hand. Thus he needed to wiggle free bit by bit while using his dexterity to his advantage. After some practice, he had developed a technique in which he replaced his arm with a pillow.

‘There we go...’

After the deed was done he slowly slung himself out of the bed that had been replaced for a larger model the moment he got together with Elodia. Even now he wasn’t sure how it happened that two awkward people like them got together but it just seemed that they were somewhat attracted to their own work ethics.

This of course wasn't the only thing that they were going for each other. There was an obvious physical attraction there, as he was trying to tiptoe away from his bedroom it was brought to the forefront.

"Where are you going? Is it morning already?"

Elodia's somewhat sleepy voice made him stop and turn away. She slowly sat up on the bed while rubbing her eyes but by doing this she made the bedsheet slip down. This revealed her upper body to him, his eyes were quick to pick up on the womanly parts.

This woman had quite the hourglass figure that was somewhat hidden away by the type of clothes that she wore. Long skirts to cover up her legs and tops that went around her neck. The first time he saw what was under there was quite the surprise as her chest was a lot larger than what he had expected.

"Hey, why aren't you answering?"

She asked while looking at Roland's face, soon she followed his gaze downward.

"Oh, I was just admiring the view..."

He was quickly hit by a pillow to the face by the woman that he spent the time with. It was somewhat cute that she felt shame the day after the deed. It was clear that she was the type that preferred when the lights were turned off.

"Your pillow throwing skill is improving."

Roland commented while rubbing his nose that got directly hit. At this point, he knew that he should give her some space to get dressed so he decided to leave his bedroom. But as he was about to close the door behind him, he heard a muffled voice call out to him.

"I'll have breakfast ready in a bit, so don't go far."

With a little nod, he closed the door behind him and moved towards the door to go outside. The moment he opened it up he got tackled by a certain Mystical Ruby Wolf. This wasn't Roland's first rodeo though, he braced himself for the impact by lowering his center of gravity.

"Stop it Agni!"

Though he managed to survive the initial tackle of love, he wasn't able to dodge the wolf tongue that assaulted his face. His last resort was to turtle up before his face got drenched in slobber.

"Down boy, here..."

To get out of this predicament he decided to use his secret weapon. Agni looked to the side as he noticed something that was held out to him.

"You want this? Go get it!"

It was a rather thick-looking sausage, which Roland promptly threw to the side. It was the type that Agni liked the most, thus he instantly jumped off his master to get to the food.

"Stop jumping on me Agni, I might not be able to survive it after you evolve further..."

Roland wasn't sure to what Agni would evolve when he got to level one hundred. But it would probably be a larger wolf creature, maybe even one that was big as a horse. While he was able to take the tackles, for now, he feared that in time it could get dangerous for him or the people around him. If Agni decided to tackle Elodia one of these days, she could actually get hurt in the process.

"The weather is fine today..."

When he stepped outside he noticed the sun rising over the horizon and greeting him with a nice shade of red. If he was near a church there would be many believers praying and bowing. It was a nice little gesture that they greeted the new day with.

Roland felt a bit odd, he had been able to reincarnate into this world but didn't feel like praying. Many times he asked himself, how was he able to come here. It defied all logic and pointed towards there being a higher power. Even with the evidence there, he didn't really feel like praying or worshipping deities.

"Everything seems in order..."

As it was his self-created weekend and the shop was closed he decided to just go around the compound that he had created. He arrived in this city about four years ago and went through some growing pains in the first year.

After the store was created the problems somewhat died down with only the dwarven union remaining. Even with them there, it was somewhat peaceful all things considered. There were no close calls like with Robert in the dungeon.

His brother had also stopped reaching out to him as much. Due to how well he scored at the academy, he was given a somewhat high position in the army. Now he was a true part of the kingdom just like he wanted.

Robert was on a trajectory very similar to his father but Roland didn't think that he would get that baron title. The two other sons had a big leg up but as his aim was to be part of the royal knights, he wouldn't really need the title.

When it came to Lucienne, he wasn't sure. His sister apparently was working diligently at the same magical academy that both Lucille De Vere and his helpful cat associate was at. While in a sense this gave Roland a good idea of what she was doing, it was also somewhat dangerous.

If she somehow ended up walking in on a conversation that he was having with Lucille or the professor he could have been discovered. From what he knew, his sister would probably rush right over here which could bring his father along as well. Then his whole cushy life as a craftsman could be at risk. Then there was still the issue with who wanted to get him killed and the cultist problem that he was trying to forget.

'All I can do is prepare for that time, the past has a way of catching up to you...'

Roland had already created a structure for himself in this city. He was dead set on living here, his strength was reaching a level at which he felt somewhat comfortable. The next step would be getting into tier 3 and for this, he needed to dive back into the dungeon soon.

Before he could do that, he needed to create a new set of magical tools to help him defeat what was behind that stone wall. The biggest problem with that was the lack of funds, the resources that he brought back would not last him forever and he still needed more products for his shop. Luckily had enough backlog to last him for now, unless something pushed him over the limit he probably wouldn't need to stress himself out over it too much.

The check-up over his land continued as he started examining the detection devices that he had built. Magical turrets were placed everywhere and the previously wooden wall was now made from stone and steel. At night it would be charged with a voltage that had enough power to stun a person.

Small acts of violence and attempted robberies did transpire from time to time. Even though he was paying the thieves guild some of his gold to keep them out, thieves from outside the city sometimes came to cause some trouble. They lived their life on the edge as when discovered by the guild, their life would be forfeit after causing trouble.

"Breakfast is ready."

"I'll be right there."

About the check to his defensive measures, he heard Elodia call out to him from afar. There was nothing better than enjoying a home cooked meal by someone that actually knew how to cook.

Thus he was quick to sprint back home, even though it was just scrambled eggs with some meat, it tasted like a gourmet meal. How a skill could alter the taste so much was above him but he could somewhat feel mana radiating from it, which probably added to the unique taste.

Back at home, the two were now finishing up their food, the day had just started and as Bernir was out of commission Roland wasn't sure what to do today. But while looking at the person opposite him, he started thinking that taking a break from time to time wouldn't be such a bad idea.

"Are you finished?"

"Ah yes."

He nodded while being lost in his thoughts. It was time to do the dishes and then Elodia would probably need to go back into the orphanage. This was probably one of the biggest problems of this relationship as both of them never really had any time to spend with each other. One day per week at most as being stuck working long hours was normal.

"Oh right, I almost forgot..."

"What is it?"

Elodia asked while cleaning up the table.

"Just wait a moment, I'll be right back."

She was a bit surprised to see Roland rush off towards his workshop but she didn't ask. The dishes needed to be done and then it was time to go back to take care of the kids. While she enjoyed her stay here, the two troublemakers that were left to tend to the young ones were on her mind.

After a minute or two, he was back with something sparkling in his hand. The moment Elodia saw it, her mouth opened wide.

“W-what is this?”

“Oh nothing, just a small gift, just give me your hand.”

He did ask for permission but even when she protested he didn't stop. Soon a nice expensive-looking bracelet adorned Elodia's wrist. At first glance it didn't really look expensive, it even looked to be made from regular silver.

It wrapped around her wrist through a thick chain and the interesting part depicted a wolf shape. The inside of this wolf was all red with some smaller sparkly stones around it.

“Put some mana into it.”

Roland said while Elodia nodded and followed the instruction. When she injected some of her mana the red wolf gem started to glow brightly. Soon the glow started to change shape into something that looked like a picture.

“T-this is...”

Roland nodded as what they were now looking at was something similar to a hologram. In the hologram Elodia could see herself, Roland and Agni standing together. This was a snapshot he had done with one of his newer inventions before.

With some fiddling around he managed to store the image in the runic program and use an illusion spell to present it outwards. This was not some new technique or anything as he had taken the knowledge from one of his research books. For one reason or another, the other runesmiths didn't bother with it too much but for him, it was a nice way to show his gratitude.

“Try not to use it too much, it will drain your mana fast and you might get a headache.”

He explained while pulling his hand away. The bracelet was made with some of the rare metals that he took from the dungeon. With this world being how it was, Roland still worried that if it looked too fancy that it would be a prime target for the thieves.

“You can also hide it under your sleeves... um...”

While trying to explain his worries he noticed that Elodia was somewhat quiet. When he looked at her face he noticed that her eyes were glued to the accessory that he made for her. It took a few moments for her to realize that she was injecting too much mana into the bracelet which was obvious as she reached towards her forehead.

“That's why I told you not to use it too much...”

Roland placed his hand on Elodia's forehead. With the help of his mana regulation skills, he was now able to somewhat alleviate mana deprivation in other people. Normal people like Elodia without battle classes didn't have much mana and lacked any means of managing it. Probably holding the image for a minute would be the most she would be capable of.

“Maybe this wasn’t such a good idea, how about I make one without that image...”

“What? No!”

When he asked for a return on his gift, he was given a loud rejection. It was somewhat funny to see the mostly serious Elodia protect her wrist and move away from him. He just moved his hands up into the air and smiled.

“Fine, have it your way, just don’t use it too much.”

For the following few minutes, he noticed that she was looking at the bracelet an awful lot. But the dishes needed to be washed so it needed to be put to the side for the time being. Even then, her gaze was glued to it which made Roland a bit stressed as if she was overthinking the gesture.

Soon they were finished and it was time to go back to the city. While normally Roland would leave the escorting duty to Agni, this time around he decided to do it himself. His house was now a small fortress with actual golems patrolling outside. Even when someone managed to break into the store or scaled the wall, they would be in for it.

Elodia was back in her full getup which made her look like a Victorian maid. Her hair was tied in a ponytail and with her glasses on, she could pass for a head maid of a duke household.

The glasses gave her a very professional look but they weren’t really something that she needed. Only later did he find out that the glasses were just a magical item with the analyzing skill on them. Her eyesight was just fine but she explained that she got used to wearing them for so long that now it felt strange to not have them on.

It was kind of a refreshing experience after his somewhat hectic dungeon exploration. No sleep, paired with the constant stress of something appearing to kill him was not something he wanted to face every day.

With his advanced age, he started to learn to appreciate the little things, just as his slow walk towards the city with a woman hugging his arm. At this very moment, she was chuckling, as instead of his arm she was mostly gripping the cold gauntlets underneath it.

“You really need to learn to leave the house without those.”

“Better safe than sorry.”

He replied as they continued. While he had mellowed out after the years, just as Elodia didn’t feel comfortable without her glasses so did he without some of his armor. The gauntlets were something that he wasn’t willing to part with as slinging some quick spells could save his and Elodia’s life.

But their happy faces would soon change as they approached the orphanage. What seemed to be the start of a nice day quickly turned sour as Roland heard shouting.

“God damn bastard!”

Elodia and Roland stopped while looking at each other and quickly increased the pace. The voice that they heard clearly belonged to Armand and as they arrived at the scene it was a mess.

On the ground, they saw two men in leather armor. They were knocked out cold but there were two more with raised weapons looking at Armand. Behind the two men was an older-looking gentleman, by his clothes he looked like some kind of rich merchant.

Roland was quick to place himself in front of Elodia that was about to run towards her idiot brother. Luckily the men that Armand knocked out didn't seem to be proper city guards but just some hired bodyguards instead.

'What is this about...'

The scene felt strange as the old man didn't seem perturbed by the fiasco. By the merchant's side, he also noticed some kind of parchment that was now on the ground that the man was looking at...