

Runesmith 193

Chapter 193: A new Trial a new test part 2.

Roland's eyes were glued to the display screen on which a table appeared. It was similar to a status page but it didn't have any numbers to it.

"Is this my score? I guess instead of numbers and percentages it went for letters..."

This made him think of a school grading system that some countries from his previous world had.

Speed

A

Design

C

Functionality

B+

Rune Quality

A

Simulated Event

B+

Final Grade

B+

It seemed that A was the highest grade that you could get from the test. If it was anything like in his old world then F would be the lowest. While he did good on the test there was one that stuck out from the rest, the grade for design. Probably making it just a plain old square with nothing else lowered it.

"Do I need to make it look more intricate and fashionable?"

He pondered this for a moment while looking at the grading system. It was clear to him that the three bullet points that appeared on the piece of paper were the main requirements. In it were some clues for that simulated event that he was now graded on.

Perhaps if he didn't rush it he could have gotten some better results. It was still a lamp that did its function but perhaps if he altered it to be standing up on something he would have gotten an A in Functionality. The test seemed to be lenient as it gave him a B+ for it anyway.

"Perhaps the other tests will have more bullet points that count towards the grade?"

Roland continued to look at the screen that had given him his rating. There was one small problem, even though he continued to stay there, nothing happened. The timer above it continued to tick down

instead of stopping which at first made him quite confused. Did he need to do something else? Was the test not finished?

“That’s not it...”

He shook his head as he was convinced that this part of the trial was over. The small hint of what was happening was the small text under the large table with his grades.

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‘Please wait’

The clock above the TV screen continued to tick down and it would take some hours until it reached zero. What was happening was probably due to him finishing up fast. Before the clock counted down to zero the next stage of the test wouldn’t start. This left him with slightly below five hours.

Now if he was correct then spending some time in this hangar to look around would probably be a wise thing to do. There were some sections that he didn’t examine and there was also the lack of proper magical tools that he was used to.

In five hours he could easily assemble some helpful items that would probably help him through the next few tests. This was probably the reward for getting an A in speed, what this trial was testing were his capabilities of assembling. He was given the basic tool for everything but would these be enough for the completion of the later tests?

While he had his theory there weren’t that many indicators that the next test wouldn’t start while he was gone. Thus for the first hour or so he was forced to remain around this area. He continued to peek at the screen while going through the shelves and gathering materials. Luckily for him, there was a section with some baskets and even a cart that was strangely similar to one a person would find at a store.

For the time being, he concentrated on gathering resources that could aid him in further manufacturing. For this, he would first need precise runic welding wands that could help him combine the various premade materials here.

From what he was seeing this was not a test on his blacksmithing skills, it was more of a test of his manufacturing skills. In some isles, he even spotted fully made sword blades that were only lacking a hilt. In another section, there were various hilts that just needed to be matched with the correct blade and correctly assembled.

In his ‘shopping cart’ he had also brought over quite a bit of mana fluid. While he had a lot of mana himself sooner or later it would run out. Crafting simple runes didn’t drain him too much but he needed to see the bigger picture.

Creating a proper power generator was impossible but he didn’t need to limit himself to it. Thanks to the many resources around he did not need to worry about such things. There was no need for him to make a generator of any kind.

Converting electricity back into mana was not needed here as he had enough mana fluid to go around. What he needed to watch out would be to contain all of this fluid in a resistant container through which he could power the tools.

For this reason, he had acquired a large drum that was made from a resistant alloy. It was a mix of some metals that he was familiar with like durasteel and deepsteel which would make it adequate.

This drum didn't have any sort of openings for some reason but this made it perfect for his power generator. He only needed to puncture the top and then fill it up with Elokin's Fluid. But before attempting this he would need to inscribe the correct runic patterns on the outside and also check if the drum wasn't too thick for the runes to work. There was a certain limit at which the runes would be unable to draw the mana from the fluid but in this case, he was lucky and it would work.

'I have the container and the fluid, even the cables...'

Roland looked at the precisely created cables through which he would be able to run the mana through into his new tools. For some reason even this was in a section, the more he continued to look around this place the more he concluded that he was supposed to alter this simple workshop.

But while it was nice to find all the materials he needed it also pointed towards a more concerning matter. With so many components everywhere the scope of the trial started to grow. The further tests would probably get increasingly more difficult and he would only be limited by his own resourcefulness and not by the supplies he was handed.

"That leaves me with three more hours... Can I do it?"

Roland looked into the distance where he could somewhat see the clock. It was ticking down normally but what would happen when it finished was unknown to him. Would it just spit out a new page or would there be something else?

He still didn't know what the rating system was for, was a B+ even enough to go forward or did he need to get an A? There was also doubt in his mind about the validity of this Runic Engineer class that he was trying out for. It didn't offer him any new knowledge as some of the tier 1 trials before he started them. For The time being, he could only speculate on what it would offer him in the future.

Thus while the time was winding down he concentrated on preparing his new makeshift battery that would help him use some of the tools if he ran out of mana. The process was kind of rudimentary as he only needed to heat up the metal drum with the help of the forge and hammer runes into place.

This required a lot of concentration but for some reason, the mana flow in this trial was somewhat good. There were also no distractions, it was deathly silent in here as only the sounds of his hammering echoed through it.

The whole structure was probably only an elaborate illusion that he even might be able to examine if he activated his eye skill. But he decided against that as he was afraid that he would incapacitate himself if he tried to examine such an intricate magical environment like this.

"This should do it..."

With the help of his enhanced body and skills, he was finally able to create his makeshift energy generator. From the outside, it looked like a boiler with a few sticks sticking out from it and it was also covered with various runic symbols. These stakes had wires wrapped around them which then led over to his runic wand.

This one, in particular, looked like a soldering iron and it was used for something similar. The end would go quite hot and be able to melt most of the metals in this place. This tool was made so that he could weld materials together as it was a lot faster than doing it the old-fashioned way. There was no time to produce higher quality tools like a drill yet but perhaps if the next trial was an easy one he would have enough time to tinker some more.

When the clock in the distance was at about five minutes Roland decided to leave this workshop area. It was time to find out what the next trial was going to be, probably he was in no danger of failing just yet.

After arriving he waited diligently for the clock to run down to zero. When the last-minute started he also heard some kind of strange dinging sound. It was clearly an indication that the time was running out. The numbers on the counter changed colors to red as they continued to tick down until they zeroed out.

“Huh?”

The TV that looked frozen finally sprung into life almost at the same time as the time ran out. Roland was a bit surprised the moment the next screen popped up which represented a somewhat cheerful-looking panda. It looked very cartoonish and was holding a large ‘Congratulations’ sign above its head while dancing at the same time. A sort of victory tune played to accompany the panda’s dance.

This whole thing was accompanied by some music that suddenly was cut off along with the video on the screen. The whole TV went silent and turned off as if the strange spectacle didn’t occur. Before Roland could ponder this occurrence he heard printer noises to his left. The slit in the wall started producing another piece of paper with new instructions.

‘Is this supposed to be vague to test the person changing the class?’

Roland wanted to give out another sigh as these tests were starting to annoy him. Most of the time he had no idea what he was supposed to watch out for. Perhaps next time he would do as bad as he could and fail so he could think of a better strategy in peace at home.

“Let’s see... what do they want me to do this time, this one is somewhat different.”

*A party of four, one dagger rogue, one shield warrior, one ranger, and a spear warrior are heading through a treacherous forest. Soon they will encounter wild goblins that are led by a tier 2 hob-goblin shaman, they find themselves without proper weapons. *

Instead of a list of requirements, he was given a short description this time around. He could already imagine four puppets representing these classes going into a dark forest and being attacked by goblins.

The biggest problem in this scenario was that he wasn’t particularly sure of how many goblins they were up against. They had a chieftain that was a shaman, this was something similar to a human mage that used various rituals to fire off spells.

This type of monster would use incantations in its own goblin language. It used its minions to protect itself while throwing various destruction spells at any people that it came across which made it a dangerous foe. The strategy to go against such a foe would be to somehow keep it from casting spells.

The party that he was working with did have a ranger with them. This tier 2 class was good at shooting a bow which could be used to keep the shaman from casting. When looking at the composition he could imagine the warriors protecting the ranger while he kept the shaman busy. Then the rogue could try sneaking up on the shaman for an assassination attempt.

But would that even be an option? Roland didn't know how these 'adventurers' would act in the scenario. He was supposed to supply them with items that would help them survive a bout with the goblins. They all had tier 2 classes and their opponent was of the same tier, it wasn't mentioned in the page but he expected there to be some other hob-goblins in the mix.

'Is it enough to make weapons for them? Will it be that easy...'

He wasn't sure, this was only the second test. It seemed that it might be up to the quality of the weapons and nothing else. This would probably be the focal point of this timed trial but it didn't mean that he could add a few items that could shift the tide of battle.

"But that depends on how much time I will have."

Roland mumbled to himself while looking up towards the clock that was above him. There the first number shifted to twenty-four before quickly dropping down to twenty-three. He would have a day to prepare everything which wasn't a whole lot to make four sets of weapons.

After seeing the timer a clicking sound escaped his mouth. Before moving back to his shopping cart he decided to take a look at the glowing glass case. This one was larger than the last one and thanks to his skills he was able to measure its size accurately by just looking at it.

One of the weapons that he needed to create was a spear. These though varied in length and size quite a bit. This container had a limited capacity and he would need to limit himself to around two and a half meters. If he placed such a spear at an angle he thought it would fit.

He then quickly turned around to where he left the shopping cart, first he needed to get the parts for his creations. The spear would be one of the easier ones to create as he just needed to find a long enough shaft to fit on some of the premade spear tips that he had previously seen around this place.

The spear was one of the easier weapons to use and had various advantages over the popular swords with their superior reach. For the spear tip, he would need one with some wings at the side which would stop the tip from over penetrating during a thrust. If he just fastened a smooth tip, it could over-penetrate through the monster's body and get stuck which could cost the user their life.

Then for the other warrior, he would go for a regular one-handed sword and shield combo. As previously seen he would only need to attach the hilt along with any addons like mana stones to lower the mana requirement for the runes that would be added later.

Thanks to the names of the classes of the adventurer party he would be able to choose the correct runic enchantment. No one in this party had much mana which limited his choice to the more basic spell augmentations.

This was not a problem as he believed that this was just the part of the test. Putting on the strongest runic enchantment could be counterproductive depending on its user. Not many people would be able to use Roland's custom runic armor as they would just get a migraine after a few spell uses. It was the same in this case where less was more.

Everything that he needed was here. If he actually had to make everything from the ground up, there would be no way for him to pass this test. But as it was, the most time would be spent on modifying the hilts to house sockets for the mana stones and then doing the runic augmentations correctly.

'Let's get to work.'

He nodded to himself and then disappeared between the isles of materials.

Chapter 194: A new Trial a new test part 3.

"I feel like they are missing something..."

Roland was looking at the basic set of weapons that he created for the next scenario. The weapons were fashioned with mana stones and were ready to cause some damage. While the clock was ticking down he decided to examine the items that he created with his analyzing skill.

Winged Spear

Deepsteel [Lesser Piercing Rune – Highest]

Longsword

Deepsteel [Lesser Sharpness Rune – Highest]

Spiked Kite Shield

Deepsteel [Lesser Mana Barrier Rune – Highest]

Longbow

Bronzewood [Lesser Steady Aim Rune – Highest]

Dagger

Deepsteel [Lesser Sharpness Rune – Highest]

Throwing knife

Deepsteel [Lesser Paralyze Rune – Highest]

Dagger

Deepsteel [Lesser Sharpness Rune – Highest]

Arrow

Bronzewood/Deepsteel [Lesser Fire Rune – Highest]

Arrow

Bronzewood/Deepsteel [Lesser Velocity Rune – Highest]

He decided to use one of the materials that he was very familiar with, deepsteel. There were many premade parts that he only had to attach himself. It was clear that this test mostly rated his problem-solving capabilities and not just pure crafting.

For the Spear Warrior, he went with a model with wings below the tip and along with a piercing rune that would augment the tip during penetration. This magic increased the forward momentum during a thrusting attack and helped generate more power.

The other weapons also had similar simple enchantments that he had been able to perfectly runecraft on them. Roland was worried about the mana usage thus he also placed mana stones on each of them to further augment their longevity.

The biggest problem that he faced was with the bow. This was not a weapon that he was very familiar with and the material used was unfamiliar as well. Bronzewood was able to stomach certain runes without going up in flames as regular wood. But it also was someone hard to work with as he had to actually carve out the sockets for the mana stones and glue them in with a mana transmitting adhesive.

Luckily for him, there was everything that he needed here. Thanks to his leveled up analyzing skill he was able to quickly find the correct vial. While the sections were somewhat labeled most of them didn't go into much detail.

For instance, if he wanted to get a chain of some sort there would be a shelf full of them out there. They would be separated by type and material but the labels didn't go into much detail further. He would need to use his own eyes and skills to determine which were made from deepsteel and which were from regular iron. Without working at the forge and having to haggle with merchants for years he would probably not be able to get through this task.

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He was also forced to fashion multiple arrows from the same material. They weren't that difficult to make but he decided to place small runic enchantments on them all. He didn't know if the scenario would give the archer from the party their own arrows so he was forced to make quite a lot of them.

While he wished to place something like a guiding arrow spell on them, he feared that it would be too much for the archer to handle. The bow already had its own runic enchantment that would help them steady their aim even in a stressful situation. It didn't drain much mana as it didn't really help with the arrow shooting it just eliminated some of the outside factors that would make an archer miss.

Most of the arrows he assembled were just regular ones without any enchantments whatsoever. Then he made two that he thought could be used for the more tougher opponents.

The lesser velocity rune when activated would increase the momentum of the arrow fired. Thus it would add to the penetrative power and speed of the arrow making it into an even deadlier projectile. It would use up some more mana but in the hands of a skilled archer it could be used to penetrate through some hard defenses.

Then there was the fire rune that he thought could be utilized in the forest setting. They were going against goblins which would probably try to surround them while hiding behind trees. The flame room

could be used to set the environment ablaze and force the enemies out of their hiding area. Yet it could also backfire if used wrongly and the party got themselves entrapped in a burning forest.

The biggest problem with this scenario was that Roland had no way of knowing what the puppets would do. He could only hope that they would not randomly fire off the weapons he provided to them. The rogue was also provided with some throwing knives that could paralyze their opponents but would he use them on a hobgoblin for a quick win or waste them on a regular one that he could potentially just defeat with his regular weapon?

‘While this should do, I’m not sure the style grading will be that good...’

Roland wasn’t really used to making beautiful-looking weapons. He valued functionality over style any day of the week. Polishing these weapons to perfection and giving them a nice paint job could potentially raise that grade but it would also cause him to lose more time. The quiver that he fashioned for the arrows was also quite basic, produced from a tube-shaped leather container and some straps that he listened to it.

The only ‘stylish’ part of his creations were the various mana stones that were placed in strategic locations. Without them, the weapons and shield would probably look quite plain. Yet he didn’t feel like wasting his time on making them more beautiful would be very advantageous to him.

While thinking he turned his head towards the clock in the distance, twenty hours had passed since the test had started. He was finished with looking over his creations that were in working order. Now Roland could either place them in the glass case or add some finishing touches that would probably not add anything to their functionality.

‘I guess the style and speed rating should equal themselves out, I don’t need the highest grade, I just need to pass.’

After nodding to himself he packed up everything and made his way towards the trial area. There he deposited all of the items into the large box. The spear needed to be placed at an angle and barely fit along with all the other weapons. After closing the large container it started sliding down into the ground and now he just needed to wait for the TV to turn on.

The TV screen activated after the time was up and presented him with a zoomed-out location. It was hard to make out anything but the large trees that were everywhere. Soon it started zooming towards another location and he could finally see the party of adventurers that he had outfitted.

Like in the first test, the represented humans looked similar to crash test dummies made from wood. These ones were wearing leather and even half-plate armor, the shield that he made was quickly recognized by him as the puppet that was in the front was holding it with its wooden hand.

It strangely fit perfectly into its hand, as he had no measurements of the people using these weapons he tried to imagine your average shield warrior’s size. The spear warrior was in the back while the ranger and rouge were on the sides. They were in a basic formation with the warriors ready to meet the danger head-on.

They continued to just walk slowly through the forest while Roland was giving a somewhat third-person view of the scene. The screen didn't have any buttons or remote so he was unable to see where the goblins would be hiding but soon the action began.

The rogue that was in the middle turned to the shield warrior and it was as if he was trying to say something to him. The warrior nodded while raising his shield to protect his head, this was then quickly followed by a few rocks hitting the kite shield that he created.

The rocks were something that some goblin tribes loved to use before attacking. While it would allow them to stun some of the enemies if being successful it also gave away their position to the adventurers.

A blue light escaped from the shield that he manufactured. It expanded to form a wide enough mana shield to take all the rock hits from the front. While the rocks continued to hit the ranger looked into the distance while pointing out with the bow towards the small pack of goblins that were throwing rocks at them.

Roland could see the quiver of arrows that he made being used. The ones that had a runic enchantment were standing out as the nock part at the end had been colored blue. The ranger puppet took out one of the regular arrows and fired it towards one of the goblins in the distance.

A clean hit between the monster's eyes caused the other ones to scatter to the side. With so many trees and bushes to hide in, the ranger was unable to get a clear shot. While he was waiting the spear warrior and rogue moved towards the front.

The peculiar thing about the goblins on the TV screen was how they looked. Just like the wooden puppet adventurers they were not very fleshy. They actually looked like stuffed toys and the arrow that went through the head of the first goblin just made some of the cottony insides spill out.

Soon a battle erupted between them as the goblins burst from their hiding place. The party of wooden adventurers didn't seem to have a problem with taking out their opponents. Their runic weapons were glowing with a blue light as they activated them quickly. With the added magical enhancements they were able to cut through the rusty goblin short swords and wooden clubs with ease.

It seemed that the battle was over and the six green monsters that were the height of ten year olds were down on the ground. While they were victorious Roland knew that it wasn't over, the scenario dictated that there was some kind of hobgoblin shaman which had not yet been defeated.

After this little skirmish was over the journey continued and the party arrived at a clearing. There another battle waited for them, this time around with the big boss monster that was the hobgoblin Shaman.

The hobgoblins were more the size of a human, this one was the same. It was wearing a raggedy black robe that made it look like some kind of warlock. In one hand it was holding a wooden staff with what looked to be a human skull at the top. The eyes had two red gems that were glowing and taking the form of some kind of spell.

Due to the previous small skirmish, the monsters were already aware of the puppet adventurers. The shaman was standing upon a rocky ledge and looking down at the spot where the party of four came

out. Before them were about ten small goblins with hobgoblins sticking out. It was somewhat hard to make out the real numbers as the TV screen kept switching around the scenes.

But suddenly it started, the shaman that looked like a stuffed toy animal opened up its mouth. The goblins reacted as they charged towards where he was pointing out with his skull staff. Magic gathered around this weapon which looked quite realistic, it was clear that the monster was chanting a spell.

While Roland wondered why no one had decided to install any sound system to this spectacle, the ranger pulled out another arrow, this one was runic in nature. After taking aim he could see his bow glowing blue while the arrow shined in red.

It seemed that the puppet archer was actually thinking a bit. The fire arrow that he made was shot in a nice arc not towards the shaman directly but the bushes that were right next to him. They quickly caught on fire and produced a lot of flames which caused the toy shaman to fumble its incantation.

The bushes and trees looked very dry which caused the flames to quickly spread. While the shaman was standing on an elevated position there were still trees there. With all the produced smoke it would also be hard for any breathing.

A caster's tone during the incantations mattered as well, if they were off by too much the spell would fumble. Only if they achieved higher levels and tiers would something like chantless incantation become unlocked. It seemed that this simulation took this into account as he could see the cute shaman coughing while running away from the flames.

A fight ensued where the adventurers tossed themselves against the green yet somehow cute-looking plushies. With The help of their enhanced weaponry, they were able to cut open their bodies, the flesh inside represented by red cotton.

It was somewhat hard to make out, the TV screen had a very limited field of view. It also kept changing angles and zoom. But from what he could tell his weapons were surviving the onslaught, even the shield spike was used by the warrior holding it just as intended by ramming it into a hobgoblin's skull.

Surprisingly enough he managed to predict most of the fight as the rogue did use the throwing knife to paralyze one of the hobgoblins near to the shaman. He then kept him busy until the rest of his party was done with the other plush monsters to then finalize their kill on the last boss.

"I guess that's it?"

After it was done they held their weapons high into the air while Roland spotted some stuffed toy innards on them. Just like last time the TV screen then turned itself off and shifted towards the grading portion of the test.

Speed

B+

Design

C

Functionality

B+

Rune Quality

A

Simulated Event

A

Final Grade

B+

“Another B+? It still doesn’t like my designs too much...”

Besides how they looked from the outside, the weapons he made functioned well in the simulated scenario. Now after getting his grades he was free to work on some new tools for the next scenario. He had four hours left from the twenty four which still gave him quite a speedy rating.

His little power source was used to help him connect a few parts here and there but he needed other attachments. One of them would be a drill and something to polish metals on. The Grinding wheel would be an easy modification as he already had one here, it was just not connected to any power source. It was just one of the basic tools provided like the forge and smithing hammers.

At first, he did think that the drill would be somewhat troublesome to make. Mostly the drill bits that he would need to make in various shapes and sizes. Yet for some reason, he did find them just lying around along with the nails in a section of this large storage hangar. He even managed to find a clamp similar to a drilling jaw and chuck.

This was really just a test of his managing skills; everything that he needed was already here. With the four hours remaining, he managed to assemble a replica of his runic drill and then connect it to the power source. Now equipped with the drill and runic grind wheel he would be able to get his work done faster.

Just as he was about to be finished he heard the sound of the clock. The last-minute was ticking down and it was time to go check what was in store for him next. When he got there the last five seconds were going down until it zeroed out. After which the congratulations screen started playing and was followed by more printer sounds on the side.

Roland took some time to look at the paper and then the clock above. He had already been stuck here for one and a half days yet he did not feel sleepy at all. This was not due to his sleeping resistance, this testing area was somehow making him not sleepy.

‘I think this test is going to be one of the long ones...’

He had read up on some trials taking weeks, some even months. There was no clear rule of what one could get. While a month passed here on the outside world it would be only a couple of seconds. Two of the tests gave him high ratings yet they were only the beginning, it would only get harder from this point forth.