

## Runesmith 289

### Chapter 289: Update.

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#### Damaged monster core [ ???? ]

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“It’s a Lich core? The drop rate on these things was supposed to be super rare...”

Roland looked at an uneven-looking dark green crystal. This was a core of a monster very similar to the ones that golems came equipped with. The biggest difference was the shape which instead of being circular looked like a misshapen chunk of ore. Even though this wasn’t a game the chances of a Lich-type monster having one that didn’t disintegrate after death was very low.

“Could this be because it was a rare variant?”

Before defeating this monster he couldn’t identify what type of Lich. After defeating a monster a forced prompt would be played out with its name. This one was a rare Purgatory Lich which made sense considering it used green flames. At least in this world there was a conception of an afterlife and purgatory also existed. People’s souls would apparently be cleansed in the green purgation flames.

These souls would then be reborn as something new, at least that was the theory behind it that people got from conversing with the many deities that existed. There were different versions of the afterlife which included variants of hell, heaven, and limbo. Some were very similar to the ones from his past life where war gods allowed their best warriors to remain at their side.

When Solaria was concerned she was a bit more similar to the main religion that he remembered. Sinners would be cast into the eternal flames of the sun which was very similar to the usual depictions of hell. Then people that stayed true to the divine lady’s teachings would be rewarded with an eternal life of bliss. Similar to the other there was a stage in-between these two extremes.

Roland didn’t want to imagine having to be burned by green flames during the process of purgation by an angry-looking skeleton like this. His whole existence here made him believe that there was something more to these gods that met the eye. But he was more inclined to believe that the deities that people worshiped here weren’t true gods, just beings of immense power.

They were restricted in many ways that didn’t make sense for a true god to have. In his mind, there had to be something above these fake gods that was pulling the strings there but he was not sure if that was the thing that made him take the form of a five-year-old noble or if it was one of the lesser gods instead. Nevertheless, this was not the time to have an identity crisis again he needed to get out of here and check on his home.

“Woof!”

“Are you okay Agni?... your nose is bleeding...”

During the scuffle against the Lich Agni had grabbed onto one of its limbs. The monster wouldn’t let up and the wolf was slammed against the wall a couple of times without letting go. His injuries were luckily

mild in comparison to Roland's own broken hands which just got worse after he tackled the monster to the ground and started pounding away.

"You'll be fine it seems, me on the other hand..."

Roland felt like a deflated balloon, his legs weren't listening to him. His stamina and mana had been drained in a last-ditch effort for survival. Agni as his tamed beast could be easily identified and his HP was slowly going up. He suffered some damage but his monster physiology allowed him to regenerate to a lesser extent. Humans like Roland on the other hand needed more help from healing spells and potions to equal things out.

"The empyrean crystal shattered huh?"

With a trembling left hand, he dug into the satchel that miraculously survived the whole ordeal. His map wasn't showing any of the skeleton army closing in on him which meant that the spell that kept them operational was no more. Thanks to this he could finally remove his gauntlets and look at those mangled-up hands of his.

"I guess my piano-playing carrier is over."

Roland wanted to laugh at his bad joke but the pain kind of forced him to frown. While his left hand was covered in bruises it didn't look as bad as the right one. Some of the finger bones had pierced through the flesh and others were placed at an odd angle. After taking a small breather he decided to go for it. Following a crunch, his grunting voice echoed through the escape corridor as he aligned his fingers into the correct position.

Quickly after he poured some healing potions over his right hand that continued to inflict mind-numbing pain. Right at the same moment, he noticed another prompt pointing to his Pain Resistance skill leveling up. Thanks to it everything became a bit more manageable and he was finally able to move his sore body. He had gained a few levels through this encounter and one of his titles had been changed as well which drew his attention.

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### **Infernal Skeleton Slaughterer**

#### **Title**

**A title given to people that have managed to slay many of the infernal skeleton monster types. Any monster of this monster family will take 10% more damage from the title holder.**

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'Slaughterer huh? Did it count in the reanimated creatures?'

The Slaughterer variant of the monster title could only be achieved after killing quite a few of the same monster types. He needed a lot more time to gain that one when it came to goblins but he skipped a few steps with this infernal skeleton type. The Lich was part of the same family, just a rare variant and it could summon lesser variants of the tier 2 variety that must have counted towards this title. His level had also gone up but not enough to allow him to attempt the full class change that he wanted.

The Lich was a monster at the level of hundred seventy-six but Roland had already crossed the level hundred sixty threshold. Due to the difference in levels, he was only able to gain a few levels for killing a monster that was this much above him. However, all was not lost as through his contract he would have access to the secret dungeon spot.

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**Name:**

**Roland Arden L 166**

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**Classes:**

**T2 Runesmith Lord L50 [ Secondary ]**

**T2 Runic Engineer L41 [Primary ]**

**T1 Mage L25 [ Tertiary ]**

**T1 Runic Mana Scribe L 25 [ X ]**

**T1 Runic Blacksmith L 25 [ X ]**

**Strength**

**213**

**Agility**

**171**

**Dexterity**

**255**

**Vitality**

**224**

**Endurance**

**252**

**Intelligence**

**303**

**Willpower**

**291**

**Charisma**

**18**

## **Luck**

**11**

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His Vitality stat had previously been able to pass through the two-hundred-point mark and his strength wasn't far behind. He wasn't sure about which resistances the Vigour passive increased, his best bet would be things like recovering from poisoning and injuries. The Might passive on the other hand sounded like it would just help him lug heavy things around without increasing his punching power that much.

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## **Vigour I**

**Boosts Health Point recovery and some resistance.**

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## **Might I**

**Reinforces musculature allowing a person to carry more weight.**

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'Nine more left, but this wasn't all, I'm sure I saw the prompt for a new skill in there.'

He had passed level forty with his current Runic Engineer class and received a new skill. His fingers were still a bit wobbly but his curiosity was too strong to leave this for later.

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## **Basic Machinery Salvage L1**

### **Skill Active**

**When used on a salvageable object there is a small possibility of regaining used materials.**

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'Salvage ability?'

This reminded him of some RPG games that he played in the past. There was a chance of gaining back the materials used for crafting from used-up items. However, mostly those skills existed to circumvent things like smelters and disassembly. This was a far more real-world than a game, he could usually just smelt down metals and take out the parts that he could use for later, it didn't require a special skill.

'I'll need to test it out later.'

Roland believed that there had to be some use for such a skill but without proper testing, he couldn't grade its worth. Luckily there was a pile of destroyed turrets and golems that he could try using this skill on. The skeletons mana burned holes into the metal plating or turned them into melted works of art.

Normally the only thing he would be able to do with those would be to melt them down, perhaps with this salvage skill, he could regain something more.

'A title, a skill, and some levels... would be nice if I could regain all of my health points after leveling up like in those games.'

After glancing at what his status screen was showing him it was time to check out the spoils. The first one was the strange monster core or nucleus that some scholarly types like to call them. This thing was similar to a golem core but was a lot more complex as it belonged to an undead monster with actual intelligence.

'Could the Lich's mind be in it?'

Roland pondered, the golem cores contained an Ai program that allowed it to function. This he could actually translate into runes and in theory recreate a working core if he wanted. He never attempted such a feat before as there were far too many holes in his knowledge. The only thing he did was slowly implement some runic codes into his own golems through tweaking. Through trial and error, he was able to somewhat develop his own operating system for the spider drones but most of it was still copied from the original golem core.

'Would I be able to copy it? This thing feels strangely familiar...'

For some reason, this monster's core had a mana signature similar to his own. He could only explain it by the monster studying his mana pattern to an extent that it started changing itself into something else. Something like this would actually be very beneficial to his research as the whole thing would be attuned to him. Powering it would become easier when it was already used to his energy.

Roland stared at the murky green core for a second before getting the bright idea of inserting some of his own mana into it. To his surprise, the almost dark green color brightened up to something that looked like a shiny emerald. A strange invasive energy flowed through his fingers which prompted him to drop the core to the ground with fright. It was as if something tried to consume his mana as if it desired more of it.

'This thing might be dangerous...'

The image of a golem trying to absorb all of his mana and leaving a shriveled-up corpse popped into his mind. This strange Lich had it out for Roland and perhaps some of those animalistic urges of trying to be one with his mana remained in this monster's core. If he decided to put this thing into a golem it could actually go berserk just like its predecessor did.

Even with that danger in mind, he picked up the damaged core from the ground before Agni could devour it. Perhaps it was too soon to play around with it now but after reaching tier 3 he might be able to figure this thing out. The monster mind contained in this thing was attuned to his mana and would be easy to work with. It would save him years of trying to configure anything coming from a thing like this.

'No reason not to study it, if I can emulate the mana attunement all of my gear will require less mana to run.'

With that thought in mind, this item made it into his satchel and so did the monster's skeletal remains that Agni was already drooling over. The bones lost a lot of their properties without the monster core

powering them up with mana. They were quite special as a base material as they would get stronger with mana infusion. Considering that this whole monster liked his energy it could be used for quite a bit of things.

“Sorry Agni, I’ll be keeping these...”

“Wooo...”

“But you can have the black ones...”

“Woof!”

Agni barked while wiggling his tail at the black bone that was left over from Lich’s leg. He had earned some rewards and this black monster bone still belonged to a tier 3 creature. With the femur in Agni’s muzzle, the two finally decided to return to the destination that they came from.

“Hope they won’t try to take this, by law the spoils belong to the victor, at least when monsters are considered.”

Roland knew that he didn’t have much time before he received visitors. All of the skeletons would stop functioning after their leader was gone. Arthur and the adventurers in the city were probably already on their way here to see what had happened. Perhaps they didn’t believe that he was the one that defeated the monster but instead another tier 3 class holder had appeared to finish this deed.

Those people were all fine and dandy, the adventurers were not what he was worried about. His home had his fair share of attempted break-ins during its conception. The biggest one was during the incident with the nobles when Bernir was left alone to defend it. Since then thieves usually took their distance but sometimes new faces appeared around the city. The rich runesmith’s home did sound appealing and the distance from the city made it an appealing target.

Thus he threaded on forward toward what was left over from his workshop. Seeing his work go up in flames wasn’t something that he wanted to see but relaxing now wasn’t an option. Perhaps he was overthinking it but it was better to be safe now than sorry later. With the potions soaking into his skin, his HP started going up and the exposed bones started being covered up by tissue.

It was an interesting sight to behold but at this time he could only think about how much faster a healing spell would work. Both his hands were further injured during the fight and he was now back to square one when it came to recovery. His right gauntlet needed to be replaced as he had fused a hammer to it as he wasn’t fully able to grip it with those broken fingers.

After pushing through the pain he arrived at the partially destroyed underground workshop. Luckily all the magical items he was working with needed mana infusion to work so a cascade of explosions was not probable. This didn’t mean that he wouldn’t need to give this place a rework. Both his main work area, the entrance, and the training range were destroyed.

‘Well, at least the generator room wasn’t affected and the smelter is still in working order... but I’ll need to make a new forge...’

The destruction was widespread but some of the underground chambers were safe. The room he used for training his runic eye skill for instance was fully operational. He could shove everything that was

operational there for now while cleaning up the rest. The ceiling was luckily still holding but after seeing some rubble falling he decided to use some earth magic.

His foot started glowing in a brownish color which quickly spread through the main workshop area. Soon thick earth pillars started rising up from the ground and they connected to the ceiling to keep it from collapsing. With the same method, he reinforced all the potential danger zones, when the cleanup was finished he would remove them.

‘The mana particles in the air have cleared up...’

Thanks to the battle being over he could again spread out his scanners to look for potential enemies. Luck was not on his side as he saw dots representing people approaching him. By the path, they were taking it didn't seem that they were coming from the city.

“I guess the Thieves Guild is taking me lightly.”

Roland was feeling woozy but he had some time to recover. After gulping down another mana potion he would be able to exert some of his power. His map filled with dots didn't give him a full assessment of the levels these people had but it gave him a range. The danger reading didn't go into anything critical, it mostly looked like a small group of tier 2 class holders around level one hundred which at this point he was not afraid to combat.

“Agni, this might be your time to shine.”

“Woof!”

Agni's snout which had been previously bleeding had been doused with some healing potions as well. The state he was in was a lot better than what his master was in and these enemies that were sneaking outside should not be able to contend with this evolved Dire Ruby Wolf.

“Let's go greet our visitors Agni, stay in the front and I'll support you from the back.”

The damaged gauntlet was tossed to the side and was replaced by a lesser variant that he tossed into the failure bin. It was mostly there to protect his right hand from further injuries as he could not really hold anything with it. It was time to greet the visitors that had decided to come here, if they wanted to loot his home after he almost died, then they would pay the price.

### **Chapter 290: Angry Wolf.**

“Are you sure we should be doing this?”

“Yeah, the boss only told us to scout out the area from outside, he didn't say that we should go in there...”

“What the hell are you fuckers afraid of? Look at this place, the damn Lich is dead, you can see the bones everywhere.”

“Yeah and we were just supposed to pick them up.”

“Why would we take these scraps when the main dish is inside, do you have a brain in that fat head of yours?”

“What the hell?”

“Think about it, the runesmith is loaded. How much do you think the weapons he makes will go for on the market? I bet there is more loot inside, he has to have a safe there...”

“But what if he is there?”

“Hah, why would he still be here with all these monsters around, you all saw the explosion that monster probably walked into some stupid trap but thanks to it the path is clear, let's go, we're going to be rich! You have to trust me on this one.”

A conversation between the five hooded individuals continued as they made their way through a path of destruction. They found the exact way the Lich took to get to Roland's home and were using it to evade any potential traps. It seemed their eyes were being clouded by potential treasures. A magical crafting profession usually allowed a person to amass riches and this was the best moment to get some loot.

Soon they arrived at a mangled entrance gate, it looked like something burned a hole through the middle and then later exploded. The whole thing was blown forward by an explosion that left a strange rectangular-looking hole in front of it. There were strange metallic objects everywhere that the thieves didn't recognize but it only made them giddier with anticipation.

“I bet we could even get coin just from these lumps of metal...”

The thieves had an eye for making money and the blue stuff was made from some kind of superior metal. They would probably be able to drop it off at one of the dwarven merchants in the city for a nice profit. The only regrettable thing about this was that the margins weren't high and they had no way of identifying the true worth of these things.

“Leave them, our bags aren't big enough to take everything, we also don't have much time, let's find the safe first, it must be in that house.”

“What about the shop? I bet there are some runic items in there.”

“Yeah... let's split up.”

After crossing through the broken gate they had two real targets to go after. One was the store that was known in the city for having quality runic weapons and armor pieces. The only problem with it was that it had not been destroyed by the Lich so getting through the front door could be potentially dangerous. Everyone knew that magical types liked to leave strange traps to protect their belongings.

This didn't stop the group from going after them, they were experienced burglars and ruffians. They had come equipped with some trap detection devices and a large amount of lockpicking knowledge. While two of these people worked on the shop lock the other three would go inside and target the house. In there they hoped to find the safe that contained what they were really after.

This wasn't their first rodeo but considering that they couldn't see or hear anyone they somewhat dropped their guard. The entrance to the home was blown wide open and the prize was before them. No one expected that behind that black entrance only death awaited them.

“Huh?”



One of the thieves felt something as he stepped into the wrecked home. Inside there was a variety of destroyed furniture and holes everywhere but that was not what he was looking at. Further in the back, he spotted three glowing objects, two of them looked like eyes belonging to a predator while the shiniest one made it hard not to see the wolf behind the eyes.

The man could not move, not because of being scared but because of the thing that pierced through his chest. He could feel a metallic aftertaste in his mouth but could not muster the strength to produce any words. Soon the long object that pierced him retracted behind the creature and with it, he fell forward with a hole in his heart.

“W-what is that thing? A stray monster?”

“R-run...”

The man that convinced everyone to come here for a big payday was down for the count and no one would be able to save him anymore. Instead, the two that were with him quickly tossed some magical explosives into the broken home to help them escape. To their surprise, before these objects could produce the distraction they needed, a strong wind appeared to blow them back. Instead of giving them a smoke screen, they exploded up in the air.

Without anything to protect them from this beast, they could only split up and run. They were the speedy type confident in their escaping capabilities but to their horror, this wouldn't work against this beast. The two scattered which caused the monster to chase after only one of them. This should have allowed the other to get away but the monster wolf was just too fast.

“N-noo...guh...”

One of the hooded men had to look at his partner's neck being crunched down by sharp teeth filled with fire energy. The bite contained some kind of flame magic that cauterized the wounds instantly and left behind a flaming stump while the head flew through the air. The other man panicked but there was some space between him and the monster. Perhaps if he kept running he could reach the forest and confuse it enough to escape.

That was the plan but right before he approached the exit he felt an increase in temperature. His instincts told him to jump to the side and in the nick of time, he managed to evade certain death. The spot he was standing in was covered in molten flames, a hit that he certainly could not take. In his panicked state, he tumbled to the ground and was forced to look at the large wolf in the distance.

Around the wolf, he could see two large orbs of flames circling its head. Before he could gather himself to his feet one of those orbs shot forward toward his location. This he also managed to dodge but his left arm was engulfed in the flames and he was tossed to the side. Perhaps if this was all then his plan of escaping could come to fruition, it wasn't meant to be however as the third orb of flames collided with his body right after he barely evaded the second one.

...

“Agni, that's enough, the other two have already escaped, there is no use chasing after them.”

Roland walked out of his destroyed home while dragging the body of the first thief that was killed. Agni's ruby tail pierced right through his heart in an instant without giving the man much time to react. The three people here were quite weak and could not contend with a high-level monster in any way.

It was a one-sided slaughter but he was too tired to be lenient with these sorts of people. Probably if they found him with a critical injury inside his house they would slit his throat and take his belongings if they had that option. This didn't mean that he wanted everyone dead, the two people that were trying to get into the outside store quickly ran away and there was no use in chasing them.

He did not believe that they would seek vengeance for these three that were killed here; instead, they would most likely withhold this information from the higher-ups. Roland's position in the city wasn't small, his ties to the thieves guild were also known and they probably didn't want to have him as an enemy.

'They were probably tasked to scout out the area to see what happened to the monsters and acted out on their own, the job was too sloppy to be something planned.'

People like this were usually just trying to capitalize on the situation. After a big chaotic event like this, there were many empty homes that could be robbed. His home was just the biggest target as he was known as the rich runesmith. In actuality, there wasn't that much gold in his safe as he usually spent what he earned instantly on new materials for research or expanding the workshop.

This didn't mean that he wasn't rich, if people ransacked his whole workshop and sold everything that wasn't welded down they could probably retire. There were enough runic weapons and magical items to last a regular person their entire life. All things considered, living in this world was not that costly but a life of luxury was something else.

'It doesn't seem like he likes the taste of human flesh at least...'

Roland looked at Agni that was snorting his nose at the defeated man. He had gone straight for the jugular and made quick work of the poor fellow. His neck was torn open easily and his body was just there. It looked like some kind of massacre took place here but he did not think that he would be taken to court for it. Defending one's home was allowed in this world and killing burglars was as normal as breathing.

"Shit, are there more of them coming?"

To his surprise, his mapping system picked up another five people coming. This time around there was a big problem, these people were not simple tier 2 class holders, they were actually strong.

'Wait, could it be the adventurer party?'

After calming down a bit he realized that this group was coming from the direction of the city. Soon after he also noticed that some other people were following behind this small group. Instead of this being a retaliation force from the thieves guild they seemed to be the party of platinum adventurers. Even if they weren't then there wasn't really much that he could do. There were five tier 3 class holders there, even if he prepared some traps beforehand it would be almost impossible for him to come out on top.

This didn't mean that he wouldn't make a run for it. The escape tunnel was still there and he could also use the one going toward the dungeon. It wasn't unimaginable that the five tier 3 adventurers could decide to ransack his home. After going through a lot of situations like this he wasn't willing to just give everything up. Arthur could not be touched but he probably was not among the people coming this way.

"This is what we are going to do Agni..."

There wasn't really much time to prepare anything but he still had a few tricks up his sleeve. This gave him enough time to place a few leftover runic bombs in some strategic locations. These would not require any triggering components as the mines did. Thanks to the skill he could use to activate any of his runic creations it wasn't necessary.

Being able to trigger everything remotely when he wanted to was a game-changer when fighting around a place like this. Nevertheless, it would only be a distraction for him to evacuate back into his workshop. He could not take on five tier 3 class holders, this he realized after trying to take on just one tier 3 monster.

'Here they come and are those horses?'

His preparation was misplaced as when the people arrived they were accompanied by city soldiers, some of them he even recognized. One, in particular, was Sir Morien, one of the knights that Arthur arrived with. This was an unexpected friendly face that made him think that his new boss was watching out for him. Even if the tier 3 adventurers were brazen, they would probably not try to silence a knight of a noble and the guards around them. Now even less as the monster Lich had already been destroyed and could not be blamed for anything.

"Is that the Runesmith? Was he really the one that took care of the Lich?"

"He doesn't look like much and isn't that a wolf behind him?"

"Put down your weapons, that's a tamed beast."

What he saw was a group of adventurers in expensive-looking armor. Through his mana sense, he could tell that most of their items were enchanted in some sort of way. The composition of this party wasn't anything that unique but they did have one actual spell caster. It was a woman that looked to be in her late thirties wearing a prominent pointy hat and the usual robe. She was holding a staff with a large orb at the end which radiated mana.

The next characteristic person was the one that identified Agni as a tamed beast. It was a very handsome-looking sun elf in green archer armor, clearly the tracker and monster detector of the group. The next two were two very similar dwarves, one holding a shield and a mace while the other a bulky-looking two-handed halberd.

Then the last person was quite large, well over two meters but didn't seem to be holding any weapons. Judging by his physique he was some type of brawler but the animalistic features made him look like a mix between a human and a bear. The group probably consisted of three front liners and the magic user in the back along with the archer as supporters.

"Halt, this man is one of Lord Arthur's attendants."

“Is he now? Can he explain those three corpses over there? Thought we were hunting a Lich.”

The witch-looking woman pointed at the three dead thieves that Roland had dragged to one spot. His plan was to draw attention to the corpses before taking a chance to detonate the runic charges and escape. Now that this wasn't needed anymore it looked like he was hiding a murder spree.

“Those men tried to rob me, so I've dealt with them according to the laws.”

“Were these rascals from the thieves guild?”

“That's right, you'll probably be able to confirm this by examining their bodies.”

There were various ways of confirming if a person belonged to a thieves guild. One of them was just glancing at the classes they had, if they were all banditry-related ones then more than likely the person was sketchy. Sometimes some of the members carried items from the guild or had special tattoos pointing to their affiliation. This usually depended on the guild's guild master.

Sometimes a special magical tattoo would be used that vanished after a person died which made it hard to attach the body to anything. Considering that these people still had some pouches on them, there was probably some proof that they belonged to the underground. He would need to relinquish his rights to those but it was better than going to jail for murder.

“That's a 'braw 'n' dandy bit where is that blasted lich?”

The dwarven warrior with the shield asked while looking around. There were no bones or remains of any skeletons on his premises as the subjugation took place downstairs. Then the obsidian minion was turned into a leg with the rest of its bones disintegrating in the divine energy blast.

“Aye, where is it?”

This time the dwarf with the larger weapon commented while moving towards the corpses of the thieves Agni killed. Without asking for permission he crossed through the destroyed gates and was on his way to check things out. The other adventurers also started walking forward as if there was no problem but suddenly one of the dwarves stopped.

Roland was probably the only one to notice the reason for the pause. Not far from the dead bodies was one of his runic bombs. The dwarven warrior was not the one that discovered it, instead, he was being held back by an invisible magical hand. The woman with the witch hat had pointed out her staff and somehow instantly produced this spell to block the path of her party member. It was clear that she saw the runic bomb there which could be problematic.

“Watch your step Hermond, how many times did I tell you to watch your surroundings.”

“Whits the problem?”

“There are many magical traps nearby... mind explaining yourself?”

The woman looked towards Roland who she probably identified as the one that placed the traps there. He did not say that there was any danger which was probably his fault. The runic bombs would not explode without him activating them through his skill but the other party didn't know this.

“Just some traps meant for robbers and monsters wandering in but I don’t remember inviting you inside, this could be considered trespassing, don’t you think?”

He did raise his voice at the group of adventurers. The two dwarves took a few steps back but also instantly grabbed their weapons. However, before any fights could break out Sir Morien came to Roland’s rescue just like he expected. His bluff allowed him to retain some semblance of authority about this zone and was meant to deter them from snooping around too much.

“Calm yourselves, adventurers, he is not your enemy, do you want to go against Lord Arthur’s orders?”

It was good that he was wearing his helmet so that the adventurers couldn’t see his smile. Finally, this day was coming to an end. The platinum adventurers would not hurt him and now with Sir Morien here he could give him the story and also withhold the Lich corpse as it was something that belonged to him.