

Runesmith 297

Chapter 297: Working in the dungeon.

"They really went in there..."

"That they did..."

"We do have to go in there to assemble the door..."

"That we do..."

"Great..."

Bernir and Roland were standing in an empty mining area. The bubbling sounds from the middle lava pool filled the area while the two remained silent. There was a small problem with this situation, the adventurers were supposed to stay with them. It was possible for some unknown tier 3 monster to appear out of the blue. Roland who was actually at a higher level than these monsters still wouldn't be able to outright contend with them in a one-on-one battle.

'Maybe if I could develop that runic emulator it would be possible.'

Due to playing a lot of emulated games in his youth he kind of went with that naming scheme. Emulation in a gaming sense was imitating a console's hardware and software to allow a person to play games on a computer. In his case, he wanted to imitate divine spells with his runes to help him kill undead creatures. Even at tier 2 level, he would be able to kill a tier 3 Skeleton Champion with relative ease.

"The monsters can't cross to this side and the passage is wide enough for us to remain in it for now, but someone will have to go check if everyone is in order on the other side..."

He gave out a sigh as he knew that Bernir was unfit to get into the tier 3 dungeon. If a tier 3 monster appeared Roland was the only one with the reflexes to flee in time. While he wasn't that bothered by the slow warrior types of skeletons there were some that he was wary of. There was a possibility of an assassin type to appear and those could hide their presence even from his magical devices. It would be possible for such a monster to sneak up on him, it could even be on the ceiling now.

"Don't worry, I'll do it... those adventurers might get back by then so we shouldn't panic, let's just start and see."

"Aye, Boss but first... what are we going to do about that?"

Bernir whipped the sweat from his brow while pointing at the bubbling lava pool. There from within a lone tier 2 salamander emerged. It was not something that could threaten Roland's life but on the other hand, his assistant was different. Even though his level was around a hundred he did not have a battle class. What came with this was a lack in certain stats and no combat skills. One bite from this monster would probably be enough to kill him, that is if it could get closer.

"We? Is that thing on your side just for show?"

Roland answered while looking at the runic gun that he had made for Bernir. This model didn't come with a cable like the last large weapon his assistant used to combat the swarm of skeletons. Instead in the middle, there was a replaceable magazine part. It didn't have any bullets inside of it, just a rechargeable runic battery instead.

The design in itself looked like a sawed-off shotgun that was quite angular. There was no need for a long barrel as there weren't any bullets traveling through it. Instead, it looked like a pipe with a runic structure at the end. The mana bolt would come out at the end while being powered by the battery within it.

Thanks to this design this weapon would last a lot longer than the traditional magical products with set charges. Bernir wouldn't need Roland to constantly recharge his weapon as he could just replace the battery on the fly. It added a lot of weight to the device and would be unfit for any kind of bladed or conventional weapon, but for a magical staff that needed to shoot out spells, it was enough. The added weight didn't mean much to a blacksmith that had a lot of strength either, which made it the perfect tool for protection.

"Fine, I'll do it!"

Bernir took out the weapon and after turning a dial at the side that acted like a gun's safety, it was ready to go. The monster wasn't that close to the two which gave him ample time to aim his weapon. The trigger on this weapon on the outside was a copy of the designs he saw in his old world. The simplicity of it all was enough to keep it even though it just shifted some metal around to generate a small pulse of mana instead of setting off a bullet's casing.

It completed the runic structure for a moment and activated the armament that produced a charged mana bolt. This lump of blue light flew toward the monster that was just now noticing the humans near a wall. On shot, one kill, the blue mana connected with the low-level fifty monster and took it out within an instant.

"Haha, got it! Did you see that!"

"Yeah, nice shot, how is the laser sight?"

"It's great!"

Bernir held up his weapon while cheering. The magical weapon he was using also came equipped with a laser sight replica that would point out the target with precision. This was somewhat of a game changer for people that lacked battle classes but it had its limitations. For instance, magical shields could be able to counter the gun's output. Then there were monsters that were quick on their toes and also humans with superhuman abilities.

Nevertheless, it gave people with no battle experience something that could kill tier 2 monsters which couldn't be ignored. Perhaps with high enough numbers of these runic guns, they could be used in larger-scale warfare. But perhaps it would be better to just create a golem capable of defending itself against such weaponry while also having an arsenal of its own.

'Quantity or quality..., it's easier to make one runic gun than one spider golem. Training people with common classes with them would also increase the potential of this weapon... but with those monsters existing in this world, this might not even matter.'

Roland went towards the spatial bag and started removing the parts for the door while thinking about this world's wars. More than likely a battalion with runic guns of this type would probably be eradicated by one tier 3 person. A simple tier 3 warrior would decimate it after getting in range. They could defend against most of the hits with a good enough magical shield or perhaps even dodge them with their heightened reflexes.

'But what if I could put tier 3 runes on it? Could I even make a small gun like that? and the mana cost would be astronomical...'

The current models needed to be equipped with large batteries to work. It was the design's weakest point and required a lot of resources. The weapons also tended to overheat if used for too long just like the turrets. As it stood now, they were probably at most effective against mindless monsters but would lose their effectiveness against people that had some strategic thinking.

"Maybe I should become an adventurer, with one of these even the monsters on this level stand no chance."

"Hah, stop smiling and help me, go measure the wall and see if we have to adjust it."

"Ups, coming boss."

Finally, the two craftsmen got to work. After taking out the base of the door they started comparing it to the hole they dug out. As Roland expected it was still too small to fit the metal foundation. The height would be at three meters with the width at two meters, then they also needed to account for the thickness of the walls that were slightly above a meter. After all of it was in place, he hoped that it wouldn't break on itself after the Dungeon tried to repair itself.

Luckily for them, this wasn't such a difficult task. It only consisted of placing the outer parts on the dug-up sections and seeing if they fit. They could even drill outside of the limits as the walls would push back into them with time. It was actually faster to do it this way and a lot easier to fit all the parts in when there was more wiggle room.

First came the bottom part to which the two side walls were connected and magically welded to. The welding job was similar to the modern counterpart but instead of using a welder, Roland used his own finger to focus the magical heat. Most of it was done on the outer edges as the door was measured from the inside part and if the dwarves saw the welds performed by him, it could rouse their suspicion.

They needed to make sure that this iron door they were leaving here didn't look out of place. It didn't need to last forever but before Arthur gained some real power the act needed to stick. As long as people thought that this dungeon was only part of the original one and that it was where the Lich came from, they would be safe. If people found out that it was a separate dungeon or that it was actually another entrance to the super dungeon, all sorts of things could happen.

'Are those five really not coming back? Could something have happened to them?'

An hour had already passed since the five vanished into the dungeon. The moment they vanished through the corner there was a sound of battle but after that, dead silence. The voices of the group slowly vanished as they probably went further into the dungeon. At this moment, the base of their creation was finished and Roland along with Bernir wanted to start assembling the hinges. To fit in a massive door like this he decided to go with three on each side but this would require them to at least get onto the frame of this door and perhaps into the dungeon.

“Hm...”

“What is it, Boss?”

Having to watch over their own backs and putting this thing in place was annoying. Working in these conditions and with the adventurers gone was quite a hassle. While he didn't believe they were dead, it could be a while until they returned to this safe spot. Thus it was time to see what was on the other side of the dungeon. Previously he had thrown a few rocks to see if a monster would have reacted but now he was actually wondering if he could just go inside himself.

“Are you going in, Boss? Are you sure, maybe we should wait for them to get back.”

“Don't worry, I'm not going to go far.”

Just like before he first threw in a small rock to see if something reacted. For the second attempt, he produced a radiant ball of mana. Some monsters reacted to movement, others to energy like the Lich. If there was something hiding there it should have made its presence known.

‘Hm... nothing...’

Only after the first few tests, he decided to make a plunge. From his satchel, he pulled out a few tennis-ball-sized orbs. After rolling them down into the wide corridor did he decide to take a step in.

“B-be careful boss.”

Bernir that was standing by the unfinished entrance started pointing with his gun at the passage leading out of this corridor. Roland focused his senses at several locations thanks to his multiple mind trait but luckily for him, there didn't seem to be a problem. The orbs that he rolled were runic explosives that he could set off at any time and now they were slowly filling out the room. If a monster suddenly appeared he would be able to set them off with his more recent skill.

‘I should probably do the same to the ceiling...’

It was a strange feeling to be inside a tier 3 dungeon. When passing through the threshold he was trying to use his magic sensing skills to feel for a change but he couldn't really tell the difference. He would need to ask the other mage for confirmation but as it stood now, other people would probably not be able to tell that a new dungeon was behind this door.

“It seems to be fine, I'm not picking up any monsters in range either.”

His radar spread in all directions and now he could actually use it after passing through the opening he made. Almost instantly he also decided to bury one of his monitoring devices into the wall to help him in the future. With one of them being on this side, he would actually be able to see the dots of the tier 3 monsters lurking inside.

He was not willing to go more than a few steps in though. It wouldn't be strange for a monster to appear from within the corridor leading into this chamber. There was a fork there leading in two directions and the adventurers only went into the right one through which the Lich and most of the monsters appeared from. This didn't mean that he never saw them come out of the left one.

For the time being, this place was safe and both of them went back to work. The hinges were large and sturdy and were attached by quite large bolts. The door wouldn't be easily broken down even by a tier 3 monster when it was finished and the tier 2 ones on this side would certainly not be able to budge it. Things were looking great up to when they didn't, after another thirty minutes of work a dot appeared on the screen and it was coming from the left side corridor.

Roland was in the middle of screwing in the large bolt on the last hinge when he saw this monster appear. Instantly he retreated to the other side of the dungeon. Now with the huge hole that they created, it looked a lot scarier when the skeleton with a large build appeared before them.

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Infernal Skeleton Berserker L153

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“Woah, It's big... should we run?”

“No, we are safe on this side...”

Bernir looked quite pale when he witnessed the monster peeking out of the corner. It actually entered the wider corridor that they were assembling the door on the other end but as Roland expected, it couldn't see through it. This was actually a good opportunity for a test, around ten centimeters of the frame was sticking out into the higher-ranked dungeon. The monster should be able to see it but just as theorized, it didn't react to an inanimate object even when it didn't belong to the dungeon it lived in.

‘How much am I behind... It's not much above level hundred fifty.’

This monster was not a mage, it did not seem to care about the magical bombs close to its feet or the ones on the walls. It was clear that only a monster that was magically inclined could detect the traps even though they were at a base of tier 2. This made Roland think, while he did not have his mana cannon here, he was quite high in levels, even above this monster. It would probably not be possible to kill the monster in one shot but with it just standing there like always, he felt somewhat confident in a more traditional approach working as well.

“Bernir... could you move away for a moment.”

“Boss? Why are you placing the power crystal on your chest...”

He knew what the answer was and thus he started to move away toward the secret passage they came from. It was clear that Roland was going to shoot his most powerful beam out. Bernir was not as convinced as Roland about the whole situation as he had not been here training for months and had gotten used to seeing tier 3 monsters be training dummies.

“WOAH!”

Bernir's runic gun almost fell to the ground as he felt the mining area rumble a bit. The flash of light that happened before it was Roland's chest beam flying towards the Infernal Skeleton Berserker and connecting with its ugly face. The monster was just standing there and even though its enemy was standing in the middle of a large metallic frame it couldn't see him.

However one blast was not enough, half the monster's face crumbled down to the ground as the mana burned through the bones. The monster became enraged and charged toward the location where the attack came from. Roland did step back a bit but the trust he had in this location was already ingrained in his mind. The Infernal Skeleton ended up at the end of the corridor but stopped right before the door, it stared at the person that dealt it the attack and promptly turned around.

This was what Roland was waiting for and when the monster made some space another large quantity of mana flew forward and this time collided with the monster's chest cavity. Now, this hit was different, the skeletal being grasped its chest as if it was missing something. It was not dead yet but the core inside of it had been damaged. Only after the third shot to the spot that Roland identified as the monster core, did the skeleton fall.

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Infernal Skeleton Berserker has been slain.

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'Almost another level... getting to tier 3 might not be that difficult...and I didn't even need to use any of the charges.'

He smiled under his helmet while moving into the corridor where the monster had been defeated. It took a few hits but also proved that if he managed to pinpoint the undead monster's core a critical hit was a possibility. With this thought in mind, he decided to grab the loot and place it in the large spatial bag before the adventurers returned. Considering that there were five dots representing people on his map, he would need to be fast.

Chapter 298: Mapping the new dungeon.

"Hah, so you killed one of them yourself? What tricks did you use?"

"Aubron, it's not nice to ask."

"Well sorry for trying to confirm this guy's strength, what if he was sent by that noble to take care of us after the job is done?"

"Haha, you sure have a vivid imagination as always."

Roland was eyed by the sun elf after the party of five finally returned to the entrance. The bones that the monster was composed of weren't that easily removed. Some tiny fractured bits remained even after he got most of them into the spatial bag. The tier 3 archer couldn't be easily fooled as he realized a battle had occurred. Myrtle on the other hand probably noticed the concentration of mana so there was no use hiding the fact.

"As you might remember, the monsters can't see outside the entrance, it's not difficult to defeat them with enough firepower and magic offers a lot of it."

His level and classes were still hidden away thanks to the necklace he was given. However, he wasn't sure if the high level mage here couldn't use some sort of means of peeking through the veil. Even with his high level, he didn't pose much of a threat to these people and even if he was able to take out one person with his magical attacks, the other four would quickly get to him.

"A'm worn out."

"Aye."

The two dwarven warriors ignored the conversation while looking at the metallic frame that was created in the hours they were gone. Now that Roland had some time to look at the group he could see signs of combat. Some scratches and small dents appeared on the new-looking armor. While they weren't carrying any monster remains he was sure that they had probably stuck all the monster bones into their satchels.

"Isn't this great though? If this Runesmith can protect himself, then we don't need to be here?"

Braum commented while looking at the sun elf that was still somewhat suspicious of the whole situation. In theory there shouldn't be a way of Roland being able to produce enough power to defeat a tier 3 monster, even with magic it would be quite a difficult feat.

"That is true, we only came back because Myrtle was complaining, we could have easily gone further."

"Haha, we were hired to help them, we can't have the Master Runesmith just perish under our noses."

"See, I told you we should have stayed for longer, I bet there were some chests hidden in the next room."

"Haha, perhaps but we don't need to rush, let us use this safe room and slowly map out the new dungeon."

"If you really have to."

The woman laughed while slowly walking out of the other dungeon into the mine. For the time being this was a safe zone but this didn't mean that monsters didn't appear. Probably in the future people would start guarding it due to all the precious minerals and metals in the mine. Roland wasn't sure what would happen to this mine after they officially opened up the dungeon.

'Hm? She was a mana scribe so she probably can draw up maps...'

Roland waited for the group to go to their tents before going back to work. One thing caught his attention and that was the large parchment the woman was scribbling on. She was a mage with high intelligence so she probably remembered the topography of the dungeon. It was only natural for her to create a map for further investigation. With it they would be able to comb through every nook and cranny before advancing to the next level or into a boss chamber.

"Want to take a peek?"

"Uh..."

Myrtle, who was drawing up the map, noticed that he was secretly glancing over in her direction. He wasn't sure how she did that as he was wearing a helmet that didn't allow anyone to see his eyes. Roland was quite interested in what the inside of the new dungeon looked like, so he couldn't help himself from staring. Luckily all of them were in the same boat here and the cryomancer didn't seem to mind.

"If you don't mind."

Normally he would have just shaken his head at the proposition but his curiosity got the better of him. There wasn't that much work left on the metallic door so it wouldn't hurt if they took a break too. As he was the driving force of this operation he could also decide on when they took a rest and attaching the door wouldn't take that much time anymore.

"Hm..."

"Something wrong?"

"That chamber is a little bit bigger..."

"Oh, is it now? Care to explain how you know this?"

The map was well made and he was already a pro at making ones himself. It took only a few glances for him to tell that something was off with the dimensions. It wasn't Myrtle's fault nor was it really that important as the shape of the room was the same. However, thanks to his mapping device that did the calculations for him he could see that she was off by a little bit when drawing this map spot.

"Actually, I..."

Roland stopped himself for a moment but then realized that this was a good chance. The woman could probably put the map to paper but this didn't mean that they could go further than that. The mapping orbs that he usually stuck to walls were easy to produce and survived the Lich's assault. With the help of this party of adventurers, he could actually map out the new area and also keep check of the monsters inside. He was actually hoping to bring it up before they entered but then they vanished inside the new dungeon, now was a good time to show his hand.

"I think you could use this during your exploration, give me a second."

Without waiting for a reply he moved toward the large backpack that Bernir left on the side. In one of the side pockets, he deposited a hastily created holographic device, similar to the one he made for Arthur during the siege. Its square shape and lack of any significant parts was very characteristic of his minimalistic designs.

"Oh, that's the first tunnel and here we have the first chamber where we encountered the skeletal mage..."

Myrtle looked at the image that was produced by Roland's runic map. Most of it showed the mining area but it also went into the other dungeon. The right side path was the one that the five adventurers took while from the left one the monster Roland defeated came from.

"Oh, what are those green dots?"

“Those represent us, I can change the color but for now anything that is green is a human, red a monster and blue a non-human animal.”

“This is quite interesting Master Runesmith, but can we see more of the dungeon? I remember that first room here, it was really a dead end.”

Myrtle pointed to the first room that appeared when a person went with the right path. His mapping devices weren't picking up any paths that went out from it so the party probably continued north to the next one. That was also the area where his Lich friend came from.

“It might be, but this map isn't perfect, some hidden areas won't show up as they are blocked by magical means, I'd have to place a sensor next to it to enhance the signal, and then it could reveal any hidden areas.”

“A sensor?”

She asked just as Roland had planned. His reason to show the woman this map was not to show off his invention but it was to make her help him map the dungeon. These people were going at their own pace and later could even give Arthur a fake map if they wanted to hide something. However if he could get them to place his sensors all over the place, then it wouldn't be possible to hide anything. Even if they destroyed the sensors after arriving at a spot they wanted to hide. As long as he recorded everything with his runic armor, he could then redraw his map later.

“This little thing? Interesting...”

The magician looked over the round object, from the outside it didn't look like much and it also lacked a lot of runic inscriptions that were usually seen on the surface. He wanted to minimize the damage to the traces that sticking the sensors into hard rock could produce. The gold-sized sensor was now in Myrtle's hand and it seemed that she was intrigued.

“So, what do I do with this?”

“Just place them into a wall, at least thirty centimeters deep.”

“Hey, what are you doing?”

“Oh, look at this, I think we can use it. No, we should definitely use it!”

The sun elf finally peeked his head in and the decision would probably depend on his word. From the outside, it looked like the woman was the leader of this group but it was more of a joint venture. The three warriors didn't talk too much or raise any ideas of their own but Aubron did cut in a lot. It was clear that his word carried a lot of weight in this team and probably only if he agreed to it would they take these with them.

“Are you sure this is safe? It won't blow up or anything, right?”

“No, they don't carry enough magical energy to cause us any harm.”

“Hm...”

Aubron narrowed his eyes while looking at the sensor Roland gave to Myrtle. It wasn't wrong for him to be careful, this was a dog-eat-dog world. People that reached tier 3 were mostly part of two categories. Either they were extremely talented or they were careful with their decisions. An element of luck always existed but knowing when to call it quits was a large part of survival. Then there was also the third group, which reached this level with the influence of others.

"If you say it's safe and can help us then it's fine but..."

Finally, the man made a decision and tossed the sensor back into Roland's hand. He approached him while exuding a killing intent that was almost palpable. It was a very reminiscent feeling that he always got whenever facing strong enemies.

"I'll be holding you responsible if anything goes wrong, Runesmith. So you better watch it."

The message was sent but Roland wasn't really planning anything nefarious. There was no way that he could actually stand up to five tier 3 class holders in a dungeon like this. Then there was Bernir who would probably be used as a hostage if he tried anything funny. In the end, a satchel of sensors made its way into Myrtle's hand, when their exploration of the dungeon continued he would have a detailed map ready.

Time continued to pass as Roland and Bernir worked on the door. The construction was embedded into the hard bedrock of the dungeon with several bolts sticking out to the sides and out of sight. Even if a large monster rammed into this thick slab of metal, it wouldn't budge. Unless someone drilled up the support bolts on all the sides, it would probably be easier to bend the metal on the construction.

"Hey boss, it seemed to have stopped just like you assumed."

"Good, it's finished then."

He opened the large door and then closed it back again a few times to see if everything was in order. The biggest issue with the dungeon closing itself onto the metal was nonexistent. Previously he had done a few tests on the other dungeon when drilling through it. Through this research, he concluded that all dungeon walls had some type of maximal thickness. If he made the metallic parts even a millimeter wider than that limit, the dungeon would not push itself over it.

'It's like a restraint in the game as if the walls had some kind of invisible wall collider that couldn't be broken.'

"Well then, there is just one last test we need to go through, I hope that you could assist me with it?"

"I guess this was part of the deal, who wants to do it?"

"Can't you do it Aubron? You always say that you're the fastest from us."

"Aye"

"Aye, let 'em, do it."

"You're just lazy isn't it?"

Aubron looked at the bottles in the hands of the dwarves while spitting on the ground. The last test consisted of getting one of the monsters on the other side involved. It came to the sun elf to lure it over to the door before it could be used as a proper safe spot barrier. Thus as a red dot was spotted on the map, Aubron moved into the dungeon to lure the skeletal monster over.

“Hey ugly, what are you staring at?”

To make it more realistic he fired off his arrow and hit the monster on the shoulder. It was another berserker that this area was crawling with and the injury worked. The monster was enraged and charged after the sun elf who bolted towards the newly made door. It didn't take him much to push the closed doors apart and duck into the mine. The important part came now as they needed to see what the monster would do.

“It stopped, Boss.”

“Yeah and it's not hitting the door frame either, It should be fine.”

It was a success, the monster couldn't follow the escaping Aubron that then finished it off with another arrow to the heart area. It seemed that the moment the elf went through the door the monster lost sight of him and started to instantly slow down. When it came up to the end of the corridor it just started turning away as if the agro it built up had been reset.

“Haha, another job well done, Boss.”

“It seems so but let us wait a few more days before making a conclusion, it needs to last for a while for this to work.”

“Aye.”

Bernir and Roland nodded while looking at the door they created. The dungeon walls covered all the spots where they were drilling and moving the rocks. It looked like any other dungeon door that existed and seemed to not be budging at all. This part of the job was done but this didn't mean it was over.

“Well then, take care.”

“We will Master Runesmith.”

The group of adventurers wasn't going to stop, they only started exploring the new dungeon. This time around they also agreed to place Roland's sensors around the area for an easier time. With them delving into the dungeon there wasn't much left for Bernir and Roland to do besides examining the door which looked to be standing the trial of time.

Hours turned to days and soon the whole floor had been explored by the platinum party. With the help of the mapping device, it was very easy to go around. Each spot had been checked and the monster variants had been checked throughout. To Roland's surprise, there was not a single Lich-type monster on the level, just a High-Mage similar to the one that the Lich had summoned.

After going through the area no boss chamber was discovered. A room with a chest was there and it even took the party of five some trouble to get the tier 3 magical item that was in it. This was not the end of this dungeon, a staircase existed and it actually went in two directions. Monsters from this level couldn't follow people onto the stairs and it led to two similar-looking zones.

Everyone took into consideration that they were quite deep underground. The dungeon could have multiple levels leading up and down that were waiting to be discovered. It was really the gold mine that Arthur was looking for and would probably prove as a good training ground for new tier 3 adventurers.

However, even the first level was large enough to take a party of five experienced adventurers almost a week to explore. Considering that there were other levels and a potential boss chamber somewhere, it would take a lot longer to examine. This time Roland wanted to use it, the door was finished but probably many more trips back and forth needed to be made. He could use an excuse to travel with this group of five to this dungeon, not for monetary reasons but to level up.

'It's time to go but this door needs to be monitored and I can use this excuse to defeat the monsters, I've even managed to gain another level.'

Roland couldn't really join the five on the expedition and didn't really want to. Lone tier 3 monsters still wandered towards the entrance and these he could take care of even with only his armor. Perhaps it would take longer but sooner or later he would hit that threshold and reach his goal.