

Runesmith 307

Chapter 307: Tier 3 Trial Part 4?

Congratulations on your victory, the rewards will be presented to you now.

“Rewards?”

A pop-up message appeared before him out of nowhere. It looked similar to the usual world message but the usual white text over the black bar was changed to a green bar. The moment it appeared a strange occurrence took place. His opponent's body which had been turned into wood chippings, started to flicker before vanishing.

The ring of fire that had been around them was also gone and the enemy army which still had around fifty soldiers started to run away. Apparently, without an officer or leader-type unit they would lose all will to fight. In Roland's mind, this was something that would only work in a small-scale battle like this. Probably if there was another unit like the Wooden Commander present, then it would have taken over.

‘Those tooltips did say something about the Wooden Captain being able to command a small force, perhaps there is a proper number for it, maybe fifty soldiers at most?’

He wasn't sure but all of the wooden soldiers and their variants had some type of description. Roland needed to read between the lines in some cases as the trial wouldn't offer him all the information outright. Perhaps if he wanted to send out his own troops he would need to split them out into smaller battalions. At least the Commander was able to lead a small army of troops of around two hundred and fifty.

“Hm... it dropped the armor and the halberd.”

While thinking about his future a strange occurrence was taking place. The leader unit that he had defeated in single combat or at least what was left of its mangled wooden body, started to flash. Within a few seconds, the flashing started to turn into a rapid flickering. Then in a flash, the body of the one he slew vanished and like in a game left some loot behind.

Roland picked up the large halberd and quickly noticed that it was made from a slightly better alloy than regular steel. The half-plate armor that the commander was wearing wasn't much better than what he had on but when analyzing one of the parts with the help of this world's system, he was given some more information.

Commander's Half-Plate Chestpiece [Intermediate]

Grade: C

Bonuses:

Increases the number of units a leader can command into battle by fifty.

‘Interesting, that just confirms my previous guess and it actually gave me the whole number now.’

If he assumed that his captain could control around fifty units, this chest piece would double his ability to lead. The other pieces didn't really have any bonuses and were all made from regular steel. The grade

was at an intermediate level which was below something he could make by himself. Normally he would replace the breastplate he made himself but considering the bonuses, it would probably be better to give it to his captain unit.

'I'm probably seen as a special unit by the system controlling this trial, wouldn't be strange if I was only limited by the number of units my settlements can contain.'

Usually, in strategy games, each base had a limit of residents that it could contain. This was usually a limitation brought by the game's system itself as there wouldn't be enough computing power to manage thousands or hundreds of thousands of moving components on a screen. He wasn't sure if the same thing could be said about this simulated world he was in now.

"My Lord, the enemy is retreating, should we pursue them?"

"No, we don't have the manpower for that quite yet, just have them take the weapons of the ones we managed to defeat."

"Of course my lord!"

At first, it might have seemed that it would be a good thing to chase after them. They would not be able to gain that much from taking their equipment. After the battle was over the bodies of the defeated soldiers started flashing just like the commander did. They had already enough that dropped here there was no reason to endanger the troops or his encampment.

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"Hm... this might be a lot more complicated than I assumed but I also still need more information, creating more scout units and establishing a proper army is my top priority now."

After the battle was over Roland was sitting in his throne room which had slightly shifted to a more robust looking one. There was still no padding for his behind but at least there was some fuzzy hide for his back. Some time had passed since he won the duel with the enemy commander and received the rewards.

He continued expanding his economic empire as he realized that everything that he was making required resources. As he saw it there was probably a way to win this scenario by just outearning his opponents. If his army had enough time to grow and if he could equip it with the best gear around, then no one could destroy his fortress.

Since the small skirmish, his town center and the fort had been upgraded to the next level. After gathering enough stone resources and wood he was able to progress. It was quite a sight to behold when he clicked the button as the whole place went through a fast change. More flicking occurred and the buildings just changed shape and expanded in scope slightly. The market building didn't need upgrading, after the center leveled up the number of merchants was doubled and he was also able to buy more stock. Iron weapons decreased in cost and steel ones became more prevalent. Some deep steel ones even appear on the market which he was tempted to stock up on. These were the type that he had a lot of practice with and could potentially change into game-changing weapons with his runes.

A few new buildings appeared after the upgrade, including a chapel. It would allow him to train cleric units which informed him that he was getting more magic into the mix. There was no way to produce mages yet but it wouldn't be strange if there was a way to get them later.

Then there was also an academy building that appeared. It was a research building focused on queuing in new technologies. At the moment it didn't have much besides a few options, one of them was masonry while the other one was a guard tower. It didn't show what this would produce after finishing but the name gave him an idea.

Masonry would probably allow him to change out the palisade walls made of tied-together logs into proper stone walls. Then the guard tower would probably be a palace to store his archers and give him a way to defend his fort even better.

With the dawn of the academy, he also realized that the blacksmith's building served a similar purpose. It was actually a research building in disguise as creating better weapons and armor would boost his new units. The moment a new unit was built it would come equipped with some default gear and this would depend on the level of the smithy.

Previously the units he encountered only had thin leather or fur armor on. After being able to produce half-plate iron armor and even steel armor, the new recruits started coming out pre-equipped with metal armor parts. Archers that wore light armor came out with hide variants so it was enough to produce heavy armor to have the light and medium counterparts appear.

'I guess to sum it up, I need regular houses for civilians to increase my population. I can then assign jobs to those people, either send them off to be regular workers or turn them into soldiers. I won't be able to assign them to anything if there isn't enough food being generated, the same goes for water...'

Roland had to keep tabs on a lot of things during this trial. The previous one where he just needed to focus on fighting and crafting seemed like a breeze compared to this one. The thing didn't even start but he was already not sure what he should invest into. Building up stone walls and guard towers felt like the obvious thing to do but he could also spend the resources on other things.

'Defending isn't the only option...'

His scouting unit had gone around this whole area and discovered a few locations that were worth looking into. There were other settlements out there that didn't belong to his current opponents, the Kindlings. They were similar forts comparable to the one he just started in but with fewer defenses. This gave him a choice to invade and take their resources.

These settlements all had town centers and markets that could store resources. They also had basic smithing buildings that could have some raw materials and weapons for him to take. This gave him the choice to focus on building a strong army before the fortifications were up. If they were successful in taking over those places and he gained all of their resources he would be profiting heavily.

Being the aggressor wasn't really Roland's style of strategy. Even back in his home, the way he won was by luring stronger opponents into traps or using his runic weapons at the right time. Here he would have to go a bit out of his comfort zone if he decided to become a warlord.

"Aid, is there anyone else trying to invade our lands?"

“Our scouts haven’t detected any movement from our enemies but we expect the Kindlings to return.”

“Hm... it might not be wise to focus on one strategy but...”

Roland's life success mostly came from his worth ethic and bunkering down. He did have some experience in managing things like his smithy and store but this didn't necessarily translate well to this trial. A choice had to be made, would he go on the offensive and spread out his armies through these lands and perhaps even join them? Or was it better to do what he was good at, which was creating a fortress protected by mechanical golems and turrets?

‘It’s probably better to stick to my guns...’

Splitting his forces and resources was not the way to go. In his mind, he could already see this palace turning into a giant fortress that could not be captured by anything. With deep steel already at his disposal there wouldn't be much trouble in creating actual turrets. After designing one working model the blacksmith could create it. He had all the schematics in his mind and another NPC appeared in the upgraded smithy which made things go even faster.

In all honesty, Roland felt that he didn't prepare for this trial but at the moment it didn't feel like it would be a problem. The first enemy that he faced wasn't all that strong and if he continued to outfit his small army with better weapons victory awaited him on the other side. It was always like that, quality won over quantity and one magical turret would be able to take out multiple enemies easily in a defensive battle.

‘Yeah, most of my designs are better at defensive battles or at complimenting my runic armor.’

His mind was made up, he would turn this into a base defense mission as the trial didn't state that he had to actually attack anyone to win. The winning conditions had not been announced yet but after establishing an impenetrable fortress surrounded by magical defenses he expected to get an answer.

Days started flying by as he continued to establish his defensive measures. Soon the wooden walls turned to ones made from stone and large towers started to appear between them. From a motte and bailey fort it changed into a stone keep surrounded by higher walls, a deeper mote, and even long-ranged defenses that could be fired through slits in the walls.

Just as he expected, the enemy nation came back after around a month's time to attack him again. The army that consisted of a bit above two hundred wooden soldiers doubled in numbers. Their weapons had been enhanced and multiple commander units appeared as well.

However, even if Roland's army only consisted of a hundred soldiers they had something that the enemy didn't have, runic magic. The turrets that he designed to protect his own home were able to rain down magical bolts on the approaching enemy. Even though the walls suffered some damage the siege failed again. This only boosted Roland's faith in his current strategy, even without attacking other settlements or meeting armies out at the field he could win.

There was also a way to fast-forward through some of the events. His bedchamber was a bit unique as before going to bed he could put in a slumber period. It was possible to automate through a few events that would normally take days or weeks to be created. It was like hastening the speed in some games to have buildings be assembled faster and he sometimes used the option for buildings to be assembled.

The blacksmiths could copy his designs faster but it also took some time and thanks to this option he could hasten the timeframe of this trial.

Nevertheless, as time continued to tick down and weeks turned into months he noticed that something was off. Even though his stone keeps turned into a concentric castle with two layers of defensive walls, there was no sign of the trial ending. The nation of Timberlings had actually fallen after a couple of months and was replaced by a stronger faction with actual siege weapons.

Defending against them had become a lot harder and even after assembling a full runic armor similar to his back home, he was starting to lose more. Usually, the weapons and armor that were gained from a victory could be sold on the market to gain better material. There was even an option to trade them out in bulk for something else, like deep steel or better materials to construct his defenses.

Even though his units had gained special skills in handling his runic devices similar to the ones Bernir used, they were not able to hold on. This was not something that he could predict as the trial didn't seem to have an end. It was not that his defenses were bad or that he was managing his castle badly but due to it not being possible to complete this trial in this way.

The moment he made the decision to turn this into solely a defensive game was the moment he lost it. There was no end to the waves of invaders and he had quickly become surrounded by one large empire that conquered everything and everyone.

“So, this was not about defense but about defeating all of the other groups...”

Now that he was surrounded from all sides it didn't really matter that his castle was an impervious fortress. He would not be able to continue this trial without defeating his opponent and as it stood his strategy wouldn't allow his forces to win. They had access to all the resources now and would slowly whittle him down.

Even if he managed to continuously win over his enemies, without capturing all of their bases there was no end to this. With how he had focused on defense there was no room to switch. If he started assembling siege weapons he would not have enough resources to repair the damaged walls, turrets, and golems that he assembled. Yet he couldn't just give up, it wasn't over yet perhaps there was a way to victory?

“Shit... what's that?”

The answer to his question came in the form of a massive army that was led by a strange-looking puppet. It was not made of wood though, it was fully composed of some sort of metal and looked more human than any of the others. It stood like a last boss on top of the hill while his castle was being bombarded by catapults from all sides. It didn't offer him even an option of a duel as it charged together with a bunch of heavy armored mounted units towards the main gate.

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“... I actually failed?”

Roland was jolted from the chair he sat on while remembering the metallic puppet's weapon smashing his head. A familiar ceiling and tools greeted him as he was now in his workshop where he activated the class change crystal. The same crystal had now turned to powder right in his hand.

The time he spent in that trial was longer than back when he was getting his Engineering class but in the real world, only a few seconds had gone by. His mind was still foggy as the hit to the head that had delivered the killing blow felt quite real. The monster he needed to face was just too strong, it was even more troublesome than the Lich he had to face and there was nothing he could do during that last siege.

“Ah... I need to calm down...”

While he had failed this wasn't over yet, there were more crystals to go through but even when he held a new one in his hand there was no way of activating it yet. There was also another big problem, considering that he failed a tier 3 trial the usual period of waiting for only one day would be increased by some number.

Then if he continued to fail his trial it would keep increasing even further. It was possible for a person to continue failing these tests continuously until the period became so large that they wouldn't actually be able to retake the test ever again. To not allow something like this to happen again, Roland needed to decide on a new tactic and also put more thought into leading an army.

Chapter 308: Tier 3 Trial Intermission

“Shit, what was it again? I can't remember... is this ascension-induced amnesia? So that's how it feels like?”

Roland grasped his head while trying to remember some of the knowledge he gained related to his new class. There were holes in his memory whenever he tried to remember some of the specifics that transpired during the ascension trial into the Overlord class. This was something that he expected after failing in his transformation but it was still a strange feeling.

First of all, he only remembered some parts but mostly the beginning. It was kind of a blur after defeating the first commander unit and getting past the tutorial phase of the whole trial. After that he couldn't really remember anything specific, the path that he took was defensive in nature but he couldn't remember which specific upgrades he went with first. Everything specific that could be seen as an advantage was being forgotten but some partial events were still there.

This wasn't anything new to him as he had read up on situations where people had failed their trials. In some situations, people would be left with nothing and could only recall activating a trial before appearing back in the real world with no recollection of anything. However, sometimes bits and pieces would be left behind and some theories floated around proclaiming that a high enough resistance to mind-related effects could help alleviate this disadvantage.

He could recall the monster that he was fighting and its huge mace going toward his head. It was like waking up from a nightmare as he was also covered in a cold sweat. If he didn't have the crumbled pieces of the ascension crystal in his hands he could even believe that. Even though he had forgotten a lot there was some information that would allow him to probably go into the next one with more preparation.

‘I guess bunkering up in a fortress won't work... How much time did I even spend there? It's like a blur but it must have been multiple months... could it have been close to a year?’

Roland had lost his perception of time, it was like waking up from a fever dream. Luckily he knew what to do to keep some of his memories intact. When straining his brain on the dream-like experience he could recall some of the key events that led to his downfall as an overlord. Through this method he could collect bits and pieces of the puzzle which he could then try to assemble later.

The main one was his decision to stick to his comfort zone. After managing to defend his own home through turrets, mines, and other traps he tried to do the same. While it took less to defend a reinforced position like a castle there was a limit. If the invading armies were too large in number or were equipped with state-of-the-art siege weaponry, there was no chance of him winning.

‘I think I put on a good defense, I remember lasting out for a while... but that won’t work if the victory conditions are different.’

Through his blunder, he recalled his worst mistake. There was no winning by only defending in this trial, it became clear that only by dominating everything would he gain the title of overlord. Considering that this title presented itself as a lord towering over all the other lords, it was obvious that he needed to take them all out to achieve victory.

‘Perhaps this is the difference between the two classes.’

While getting up from his chair he recalled the High-Lord variant of his class. It wouldn’t be strange to assume that that class version would have a similar trial. It happened often when the classes came from the same source and had a similar naming scheme. Considering that his High-Lord class was lower on the totem pole, it might have been more lenient with him and his approach of defending could have garnered him a passing grade. Now on the other hand he was left wondering how much time he would lose due to his blunder.

“It was twenty-four hours for a regular class change but considering that this was a special tier 3 ascension trial, this could take longer.”

This was something that Roland didn’t want to happen. Failing a trial wasn’t the end of the world and it could be retaken later, however, there was one problem. There was always a waiting period that continuously grew the more a person failed. The time he entered the ascension zone when he hit level hundred and fifty didn’t count as he left before activating the test but now he had actually gone through it all.

‘The period usually doubles after each failure but sometimes it could go over that, it will all depend on how much I have to wait now.’

There was no way for him to tell how long the cooldown for the crystal would take. There was no problem in getting new ones and he had one already stashed away for this location. Resources weren’t the problem, the only thing he was worried about was time. Usually, a person that failed a class-up would need to wait for a day for the next one to become unlocked to him. Then if they failed again it would take two days, then four, and so on.

He had heard of some cases where people were unable to get through their trials no matter how much they tried. Tier 3 class tests were a notch above the rest and usually had a longer cooldown period than just one day. Some people would remain without a new class even for years without an option to switch

to something easier. Others would quickly change to something lesser after realizing that they did not have the skills required to progress in a more prestigious class.

“I just hope nothing happens before I change classes.”

Roland had to take into consideration that he was ill-prepared to take the Overlord test. Perhaps even if the trial unlocked tomorrow it would have been better to continue leveling the skills that weren't maxed. There was also an option to gain some new skills through skill books before the second or third attempt. While this was the better way to approach things, in his mind, there was no time.

With the emergence of the higher-ranked dungeon, the place would start to swarm with people that could make life difficult for him. The reason he chose to come here was that the dungeon was a mid-rank dungeon that lacked anything to attract tier 3 class holders. His only cover was his engagement with Arthur Valerian which made him somewhat untouchable inside the city, that is if no other nobles were involved. Now that this place had become an investment opportunity he wasn't sure if some troublesome people would arrive.

“What should I do to prepare?”

After cleaning up the crystal dust from the workbench and looking over the other class change crystal he decided to return to his house. There he was greeted by Agni who didn't really know why his master was in such a depressing mood.

“Maybe I didn't go through those strategy books thoroughly enough?”

Considering that when he was going through all the books at the Arden estate when he was a small child, it was already a wonder that he remembered this much. His intelligence value that allowed his memory to be boosted only started to really help after he gained his mage class. It wasn't strange that he wasn't able to read into the crux of the strategy from books.

Gaining knowledge through books also had its limit and he certainly did not have any teachers explaining anything. The only thing he gained from back then was basic battle training and an idea of how to survive in the world. The next years were mostly used to study his craft as a runic blacksmith and then runesmith. There was no time to waste on learning obscure war techniques that he had no use of.

Even if he was sent off into war his role would probably consist of making runic weapons and not directing troops or taking part in the battle. There was just no point in time that he would have required that data and it was probably one of the reasons that he failed.

“Where could I get information on how to lead a fort or command troops... Wait, I think there were books about that in his office...”

Roland frowned a bit as he realized where his next destination was. Arthur Valerian was a noble and he had an excessive library in his own office and now new home. There were books on all sorts of things when it came to running a city. When he visited him from time to time he was left looking at bookshelves filled with books, some of them were related to combat out on the field. If he wanted to actually go out and conquer others, then he would need the basic tactics to go along with them.

“It wouldn't hurt to refresh my knowledge, maybe I'll find the things that I missed.”

There was no reason not to go there and go through the written information. The only uncomfortable part would be his explanation. Arthur could start asking questions and telling him the details of his tier 3 class-up test was off the table. They weren't really friends either so perhaps a trade needed to be struck. There was also a library in the city that could have some historical records or tips.

"I guess I'll go to the library first and then try to think of a way to get Arthur to lend me those books..."

After groaning a bit he decided to return to his workshop. Once there, after grabbing a hammer he started destroying the same golem that he used his new skill on. It was the middle of the night and he was not tired at all. Using this time to level up his skills was the best way to prepare. Once dawn came he was quick to pack up and head to the library where some new knowledge could be gained.

When he arrived at the building that he had never really visited before he was greeted by an old lady inside. This reminded him of some places he used to study back in college. Compared to the modern library in his old world, this one was rather small. After asking for books about warfare or old records of battles he was met with mostly silence. Considering that knowledge was power, nobles did their best at hiding things that could make the populace rowdy. Thus instead of getting some precise information, he was only left with some old historical records that he would need to interpret in his own way.

"Good that I learned this skill beforehand."

Hastened Reading L9

Skill Passive

Allows a person to read through text at an increased pace.

While dropping a few old historical books at an old wooden table he glanced at this skill. The reason he picked it up was to quickly go through contracts but it also allowed him to read books at a rapid pace. From the outside, it seemed like he was skimming through the pages but in reality, he was able to remember and then recall everything he went through.

This was the max-level version of the skill for tier 2 class holders. It could be learned by anyone with a high enough intelligence rating and it had no class restrictions. Thanks to him going through various runic books that he received from his friend at the academy he was able to level the skill up rather fast. The harder the theme that a person was going through the faster would this skill level up.

Even with the skill working and his reading being quick it would take some time to get through the books here. Considering that a lot of information here was things that he already knew there was no use in spending more than a few hours going through it. Without anything specific he could only take in old battle records that would require him to recreate the tactics himself.

"Thank you, please come again."

Lending out books wasn't really a thing here as no one had any time to monitor lent-out books. A person could either stay in the library to read a book for a few coins or just right out buy it if they wanted. With this just being a small-scale undertaking in a rather backwater city, it wasn't strange that it was mostly a waste of time. The things that were written down here weren't anything new and thus his next stop would be at the Valerian villa.

'Should I give them a heads up?'

This was actually the first time he was there without Arthur assigning some type of work to him. Usually, he would get a commission of some sort which he either delivered himself if there was something to explain or just gave it to one of the delivery boys. Roland was not one to ask for favors so this encounter was becoming quite stressful.

'Should I just talk to Mary instead? Arthur does seem to suspect that I'm some kind of noble though, he might be okay if I just ask him...'

It didn't go unnoticed that Arthur was very lenient with him. Other nobles would have probably reprimanded him whenever he used unflattering language or performed the usual greeting in the wrong fashion. This didn't help him with the problem at hand, how should he ask for the books without making it sound strange and suspicious? While he sent a quick message to the villa he continued about a good way of bringing it up.

"Master Wayland, please come in."

He nodded at the guards at the gate that let him through without complicating things. This time around it wasn't Mary but the butler that was once the mayor of the city that was the one greeting him. Considering that he was a competent craftsman with a lot of potentials this was the proper way to handle him. Probably if Arthur knew that he was at the cusp of reaching tier 3 he would have offered him a bigger greeting.

"Is Mary here?"

"No, she has other things to tend to, would you like me to pass a message to her, Master Wayland?"

"Uh, no that's fine."

His first plan of having Mary go ask the question for him was shot down by the butler. He didn't know the man too well and felt more relaxed around the assassin maid. For some reason, he couldn't get himself to trust this man so he would need to go with plan B.

"Is Lord Arthur present and if he is, would a meeting be possible?"

"Yes, the lord is in his office, please wait a moment and I'll go ask."

To his surprise, he wasn't rejected outright; instead, the butler just told him to wait. After only five minutes of waiting, he was then asked to go to Arthur's office where the lord was going through some papers. It seemed that Arthur had told his retainers and villa staff to treat him as a VIP. There were no roadblocks for him and even without having made a proper appointment, he was greeted with open arms.

'Could he be aware of my true level?'

This would make more sense if his new 'partner' knew of him being close to tier 3. Perhaps the platinum party had given him a report on the situation in the dungeon where he was able to clear out some tier 3 monsters without their help. This could have been enough for Arthur to assume that Roland was in fact stronger than he seemed. There were also no witnesses back at his home to recount how the Lich had died, it wouldn't be strange to assume that he was strong.

“Mr. Wayland, come in. You’ll have to excuse me for this mess but I didn’t expect you to visit me today.”

“I’ll have to apologize for coming at a moment’s notice.”

Soon he found himself walking into the office which looked quite chaotic. Arthur’s whole desk had a pile of books and papers on it which allowed Roland to only see the top of his head. It was clear that he was busy with something which would perhaps make things easier to explain.

“No need to apologize but what is the purpose of your visit today?”

“I came to ask for a favor.”

“For a favor?”

Arthur quickly replied while continuing to focus not on Roland but on the parchments in his hand.

“Yes, I’ve been working on a new runic operating system for a new golem design, If it wouldn’t be a bother, could I borrow some books related to warfare?”

“Warfare?”

“Yes, I’m working on golems that could work together with soldiers out on the field but I’m just a runesmith so knowing about the tactics the current armies use would be a lot of help...”

It was the thing he came up with which was only partially a lie. In the trial area, he was building golems, and if he could program a few battle strategies into their operating systems, then it could help him.

“Ah... yeah sure, Ferdinand.”

“Yes, My Lord?”

“Help Master Wayland get the research material that he needs and oh right, there might be some books that catch his eye here so help him out.”

“Of course.”

To Roland’s surprise, Arthur didn’t mind him borrowing books and he was actually quick to catch on. The books in his office were the usual ones that were printed at the knight academy which some nobles frequented. It wasn’t strange for Arthur to have them and lending them out wouldn’t be a problem as most knights in commanding positions had gone through them as well as other nobles.

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“Why did he want those books?”

“I wonder why... Did he figure something out?”

“I’m not sure it’s related, it might actually just be research material for a new golem design, Lord Arthur.”

“Yes... we should not worry about Master Wayland, if he knew what was coming he might have actually left the city.”

After Roland's visit Mary and Arthur were the only two people left in his office. The untidy desk had been cleaned out by the maid and both of them were looking at an opened letter. The crest of the Valerian Household had been imprinted on the seal that was opened.

"They will arrive here in two weeks and I'm not sure what my dear brother is planning to do... have you found some capable allies?"

"Regretfully the team of adventurers we recently hired might not arrive in time again, they have been delayed and I'm not sure if that Guild Master will be of much help either."

"Hah... No worries, we'll just have to hold up long enough for the cavalry to arrive..."

Both of them remained silent while looking at the opened letter. It wasn't something that they could ignore nor did they know who the people arriving would be. They could only hope that the preparations that they went through would be enough but as it stood now, things were looking bleak.