

Runesmith 319

Chapter 319– Back Home.

“Hey... what’s wrong with you today?”

“What do you mean? I’m the same as I’ve always been... I think, or was I different before? My memories are a bit cloudy...”

“Did you mean to say that out loud? Also... why is Agni acting like this?”

A confused Elodia was looking at a large ruby wolf peeking through the entrance door. For some reason, Agni was unwilling to enter the house when usually it was hard to keep him away from his owner. She was also in a strange situation as Roland was acting quite clingy today, more than ever.

It was to the point that he was even following her around the house and breathing over her shoulder while she was cooking breakfast before work. It was clear that there was something wrong, the change in his appearance was also apparent to someone like her. It would be strange if she didn’t notice the change in his physical appearance after knowing him for this long. There were only a few reasons that she could come up with for such a change but speculating about it wouldn’t change anything. It was better to prod for some answers and perhaps force it out if he didn’t come clean.

“Oh, perhaps he is going through puberty or something...”

Roland replied while also moving his head to smell himself which made Elodia even more confused. Before she could prod for more she was actually suddenly grabbed by the man of the house that was acting suspiciously. This was the first time that he had been this clingy as he had actually pulled her into his lap. It wasn’t like she was against the skinship but the timing was a bit off.

After breakfast she was supposed to open up the store and get to work, little Marcie was already here and doing a preliminary sweep of the shop. The young girl was quite helpful and even decided to hang outside the shop to greet the potential customers that wandered from within the forest.

“Hey, what are you doing?”

“You know... why don’t you just take a day off...”

“You want me to take a day off? What about you?”

“Oh I’m not in a rush, I haven’t had a break in years, I could use a vacation.”

“A vacation?”

She was shocked to hear Roland speak of a break. He was like a possessed workaholic that very rarely left his workshop. Usually, it was her that had to pull him away from his underground workplace. She didn’t really like to be there, the magical light that illuminated the corridors felt somewhat off. It was much better to stay outside where the sun was shining and the air didn’t need to be filtered by runic equipment.

“Are you sick? Perhaps we should go to the church and have you examined, perhaps someone put a curse on you.”

“A curse? No, I’m fine...”

“Then tell me what’s wrong, you’re acting strange, are you hiding something from me?”

She narrowed her eyes while trying to pick up any fine movements in Roland’s face. After living around him for a while Elodia had managed to ascertain a few things. It didn’t always work but if she focused hard it was possible to tell her when he was lying or at least trying to hide something from her. This time around it was a bit harder as his handsome face was a lot more distracting than it usually was.

“Hiding something? Oh right, just look at me through your identification item.”

Roland replied while removing the pendant that was usually around his neck even when he was bathing. This was something that he never did and she knew that he was trying to hide his noble birth and true name. There must have been a reason for this so Elodia was quick to activate the effect of her glasses that could mimic an analyzing skill.

“What is this...”

“Yeah, I’ve gone through a small change.”

“A small change? You better explain yourself to me and start from the beginning!”

...

Roland didn’t leave anything out, it was actually nice to talk to someone real for a change. Even now he wasn’t sure if everything around him wasn’t an illusion but by the way Elodia was acting it felt real. The wooden people didn’t show as wide a range of emotions as the woman before him. Normally he would have probably withheld some information about the trial, the part about it taking more than a year to not trouble her. However, this time around he felt that he needed to dump some weight off his shoulders for once.

“More than a year? What kind of ascension trial takes that long? I’ve heard of them taking a few months but a year...”

Just as expected she was shocked by the length of this trial. Elodia was someone that had worked at the adventurers guild for some years. She had to pass multiple tests about the theory behind passing ascension rituals if the need arose to explain. Beginners could need the information but even gold adventurers that were attempting the plunge could come asking for help.

“Yeah, this one was special, I sure hope I won’t need to go through something like this ever again also... did I change that much? You keep looking at my face?”

“What? You must be imagining things...”

He wanted to smile as Elodia pulled her face away. After she got a read on his status screen through her glasses, she unconsciously started looking at him as if he was some type of rare animal. It was probably the first time she heard of a class called the Runesmith Overlord but it was the same for him too.

Normally he would have taken precautions to not leak information like this outside. After spending so much time in the trial area, he realized that doing everything alone wasn’t the way to do it. Having his strange prestige class be known to others wouldn’t be the end of the world. Some people like the

platinum adventurers he met carried those classes like a badge of honor. They actually wanted to show that they were on the side of the elite as a lot of doors opened up before them.

“Maybe I should really close the shop today, the after-effects of a prolonged ascension trial on the human mind could be devastating.”

“Ah, sorry didn’t want to make you worry, I just haven’t talked to someone for a while that wasn’t made out of wood.”

During his explanation, he described the whole trial to her. He did leave out the part about him getting a wooden child for obvious reasons though. It was rather cute to see her so interested in the conversation. There was probably no other ascension trial recorded that was similar to his. She was still someone that used to manage adventurers so this was an interesting topic to speak off.

“A whole nation of wooden people... that sounds like something the kids would like.”

“Now that you mention it...”

Roland was far too busy working on passing the test than processing the information about the world he was in. Now when looking back, it was something that he would have probably remembered until he died. Just the way the whole world worked with the wooden people was quite interesting but the real one was much better. There was also no imposed clock pushing him to do things he didn’t want to.

‘Wait... it’s been so long that I even forgot about that...’

The emotions of seeing Elodia and coming back to this world had taken over his mind. Now after getting it out there by talking, memories of his current situation were flooding back. Yesterday after taking a bath and having some small talk through the crystal ball, he just passed out on his bed. When he woke up Elodia was already around the corner so he forgot about the current situation.

“Shit, I forgot!”

“Huh, what is it now, are you okay?”

“Oh, I’m fine... how about we don’t close the shop for today, I remembered I need to do a few things!”

Suddenly he lowered Elodia down from his lap and started to storm out of the room while leaving her in the dust. She was left there along with a confused look. It was soon replaced by a smile after she realized that Roland was just back to his old self as he stormed off into the workshop area.

“Well... have fun, I’ll be in the shop if you need me...?”

Yet to her surprise after Roland had left, his heavy footsteps echoed back. He appeared back in the dining room where the two were having a conversation. Before she could ask about what he needed, she found herself getting embraced by the large man.

“Thank you, you know... for everything, I’m not good with these things but I’ll try to be better from now on...”

“Ah, yes?”

Just as quickly as he returned to give her the hug, he was back to running back to the entrance of his workshop. The speed was truly superhuman and something that only a tier 3 class holder would be capable of. Her face was left a bit rosy after the gentle embrace and wondering if perhaps she should have him do those trials more often.

‘What if they make a move now? I just made it into tier 3 but I haven’t been able to prepare anything! What should I do first? What are my options?’

Roland noticed that his body was feeling really light. When he was storming back into the room to give Elodia a hug he felt the wood straining under his feet. His power had multiplied to an unfathomable level. When giving the hug he realized that he needed to be really careful to not apply too much strength. If he did then he could have actually cracked a few bones in the process.

‘First I should get this in check...’

Overlord’s Organs

Trait

Advanced organs of an Overlord, enhances the robustness of internal organs.

Overlord’s Muscles

Trait

Advanced Muscles of an Overlord, enhances the robustness of muscles.

Overlord’s Skin

Trait

Advanced Skin of an Overlord, enhances the robustness of skin.

Overlord’s Skeleton

Trait

Advanced skeleton of an Overlord, enhances the robustness of bones.

Overlord’s Tendons

Trait

Advanced tendons of an Overlord, enhances the robustness of tendons.

Overlord’s Nervous System

Trait

Advanced nervous system of an Overlord, enhances the nervous system and everything related to it.

Overlord’s Circulatory System

Trait

Advanced circulatory system of an Overlord, enhances the circulatory system and everything related to it.

This was one of the quality changes that a tier 3 person went through and it was making his movements strange. His body was now filled with power that was not there before. Even his skin was a lot tougher than before, when he arrived in his workshop he decided to give it a few tests. To his surprise, an iron dagger wasn't able to pierce through it unless he applied quite a bit of that enhanced strength, even then most of the time only scratches were left behind.

'The multiplier isn't the only thing that makes tier 3 people more powerful, these enhancements to the body make them... us a whole new breed.'

Even the lowest tier 3 class holders had traits like these. His theory behind these strange advancements was the large increase in various fields. First, there was the multiplier that at least doubled. Secondly, there were various skills that would triple, quadruple, or even quintuple someone's power. Without the advanced skeleton and skin, the body would sustain damage. The bodies that people of the races were born with had their limits and after getting to tier 3 they were broken.

Swiftess I

Trait

Enhances balance and perception during rapid movements.

He had also managed to finally go past the two-hundred-point threshold with his agility stat, this gave him this new trait. It wasn't the only thing he received as there was a new trait that went along with gaining all seven traits in his main stats.

Equilibrium I

Trait

A balanced body is a strong body.

'What is that even supposed to mean?'

This new trait was one of the cryptic ones. Luckily, he had prior knowledge of what this skill actually meant. It offered people with it some hidden resistances that came with having a good balance with their stats. By how much it was unknown but it would give out a hidden buff to almost all resistances.

True Runic Sight L1

Active Skill

Reveals the truth of the world to its user. The side effects of using this skill are decreased.

'That one changed for the better...'

This was one of the old skills that had allowed him to study divine energies. Now that it was upgraded he noticed a large change. At the moment he was actually down in his workshop and looking at one of his golems. When this skill started out a level 1, he was unable to even glance around without getting a migraine. Now he was actually feeling normal, there was no pain and his eyeballs weren't twitching.

'With the upgrade to all of my organs, blood vessels, and nerves, I won't be straining my eyesight as much, should I give it a go?'

Before even trying out to craft a greater rune he needed to go through some tests. This new body of his was something that he needed to get used to. Without knowing his own limitations it would be hard to progress so while he had the time, it was time for some testing. When thinking about this skill two things entered his mind, one was the divine runes that he failed to fully grasp, and the other was spatial runes.

'I couldn't really examine this before, what about now?'

In the underground workshop, he had one of the lesser spatial bags on the table. This one only doubled the size of the bag and wasn't worth that much. When he activated the skill, the spatial enchantment was translated into runic symbols that he could actually understand. With his current knowledge of greater runes, it became clear, spatial runes all had elements of greater runes in them. Without being at tier 3 and having the corresponding upgraded runecrafting skill, there was no way of creating them.

Expert Runecrafting allowed a Master Runesmith to stack several runes on top of each other. In easier terms, it was like moving from crafting on a flat surface into a three-dimensional model. While to the naked eye the runes wouldn't look that much different, they contained a lot more Ethereal Pathways than a tier 2 rune ever did.

It was already hard to cram all the miniaturized traces into the runes he was producing now he had to do the same on multiple layers. The moment he was forced to go through reading the skill books in the trial area he was stunned. It was truly a difficult task to perform the rune crafting procedure without making any mistakes. His brain needed to somehow calculate how it would look in a 3D space before the process started. Then a runesmith needed to actually somehow force this rune into a block of metal without losing their concentration.

'This begs the question... what should I make first?'

Now that he was out of the trial there were several things that he wanted to do. First of all, his old forge needed to be upgraded to handle greater runes. Then probably getting himself a new set of armor that contained all his new knowledge would be in order. However, before that Roland needed to test out his newly gained skills on something less expensive. All that red Mythril ore that he saved up would not last him for more than one set.

Then he also needed to test out all of his newly gained Runesmith Overlord skills. Perhaps this new Forgefire Control skill he received could allow him to work through a lesser forge. If he could keep the flames from melting the furnace while he was working on Mythril then he might not even need to upgrade it. There were also skills like Overlords Might that needed a test run, he could see himself going through tests for at least a month before attempting to produce something worthwhile.

"At least this doesn't feel like working this time around, I want to make that one rune..."

While Roland was just freshly out of his test, for some reason he felt invigorated. With so many possibilities laying bare before his fingertips, there were just too many fun combinations he could create. It didn't really feel like he was back to work, this time it was as if he was just expanding on his hobby. This was actually what he was here for, crafting runes and not leading nations to victory. His

passion for the craft had been reinvigorated and it was time to delve into it once more, when he was done a new world was waiting.

Chapter 320: Advanced Tinkering.

“Report!”

“Yes, Knight Commander! Most of the Orcs are dead but some of them have managed to escape. We believe that some of them might seek shelter close to the nearby villages, should we pursue them?”

“Pursue? How long will that take? We have already lost precious time...”

A fully armored knight looked at the commander before him. At this moment he was pulling out his large sword from the monster it slew. Blood ran through the blade and dribbled to the ground to only increase the puddle that was being made. A monster of large proportions that looked like an orc lay there. Its body was large, muscular, and covered in scars. The size went above what a tier 2 orc variant was capable of evolving into and it didn't seem like the knight that fell this monster had taken much damage.

“...The scouts believe that it shouldn't take more than two days, they believe that now that the Orcs lost their chieftain they will seek to establish their own lesser tribes...”

“Two days...”

The man was wearing glistening full-plate armor with a blue cape attached to the back. On that cape, the crest of the Valerian household was embroidered. The sword he was holding was a lot larger than a longsword, the thick blade and added weight would not be easy to handle. On his left side, there was a large oval shield that was quite thick as well. Even with all this added weight it didn't seem that the man was out of breath or sluggish when moving or walking.

“We shall depart, we can't waste our time on these monsters, the tier 3 is dead, let the adventurers take care of the rest.”

“Sir? Some of them fled in the direction of a village, if we don't...”

The Knight stopped himself from talking as he felt a strange pressure fall over his body. It was as if he was sinking down into quicksand while trying to push a massive weight off his shoulders. Quickly he realized that the new Knight Commander was glaring at him. His eyes were peeking through that visor and giving him the shivers.

“...I understand Knight Commander, I will pass on this command to the other knights!”

“Don't take too long, you have ten minutes, leave what we don't need, Lord Theodore expects us to finish this task as soon as possible.”

“Yes, Knight Commander!”

The Knight swallowed his saliva as he felt the pressure be lifted from his body. He had been assigned to this troop not that long ago and forced by the other veterans to relay the information to them. When walking back he could even see some of them snickering as they probably knew that the Knight Commander would react in this way. The rumors of him being overbearing were true.

“Haha, newbie you should remember this moment, don’t ever call to question any of the Commander’s orders, that is if you wish for your head to remain on your shoulders.”

“Y-yes... The Knight Commander wants us to leave within ten minutes.”

“Heard that everyone? Pack up, we are leaving.”

“But Lieutenant Sir, these Orcs must have had their camp, the citizens of the duchy could still be there, shouldn’t we at least investigate?”

“You can go ahead and mention that to Knight Commander Emmerson if you want.”

The knight that was talking looked back to the man in question. At that moment he was walking back to his horse that he dismounted to take care of the tier 3 monster. It was a Red Orc High-Chieftain a leader variant of an invasive species that liked settling near war climates and volcanic regions.

During their trip to a city called Albrook, they had been unlucky and encountered them during their migration period. These monsters tended to move around a lot which made subjugating them hard. Before an adventurer party strong enough could be formed, they would move out from the area and settle somewhere else. This was something that their leader should know, the fact that attacking their camp would have been the best way of guaranteeing their demise.

“I...”

“Good, you’re still young and fresh out of the academy so it’s understandable, your head is probably filled with saving fair ladies in distress. I’ll give you some advice, you should drop that way of thinking or you’ll suffer a quick death. Now get your ass in gear, we need to leave!”

The other knights nodded and laughed while quickly getting to their own horses. They didn’t even bother with taking the mana stones from the monsters, only the one from the tier 3 one was worthwhile. The weapons that the monsters used were inferior to the ones they had, there was no reason to take them as they were not adventurers scavenging for loot. Soon all of them departed while leaving the massacred monster bodies behind. Even though they knew that this would attract some other monstrosities, this wasn’t their problem. What the Knight Commander ordered them was their priority.

...

“Hey, quit it, not while the kids are watching!”

“Ow... stop hitting me with that ladle.”

Roland rubbed his forehead which wasn’t really hurting. Instead, the metal ladle that he got hit had been dented. Elodia was holding it like a weapon as he had been sticking a bit too close while they were trying to eat. Marcie was with them and covering her eyes with her hands. Still, some wiggle room was left between those fingers to take a peek. Jorg on the other hand was holding his head down while looking at the plate filled with soup and trying to eat.

“Don’t you have some work to do?”

“Fine, I’ll leave!”

“Make me a new ladle while you are down there.”

“Hey, don’t ask a Runesmith to make a ladle.”

“Wow, the great Mr. Runesmith is too good to make a ladle now.”

The two started going back and forth with smiles on their faces before Roland made his way back to the workshop. Ever since leaving the trial, he was still getting used to actual real people around him. Only Elodia knew what he had been through which left Bernir and his wife a little bewildered when they saw how he was acting.

There was no time to explain though as even though he was enjoying his stay back home, a strange foreboding feeling was in the back of his head. For some reason, he was fearing for the worst, even though he had attained power it hasn’t fully been expressed yet. While normal battle classes could just transform almost instantly after the ascension ritual, he wasn’t quite the same.

His real strength came from preparing for every occasion and luring his enemies into traps. After gaining his Overlord class he realized that the defensive approach wasn’t always the best one. For this reason, he needed to expand his repertoire by preparing more gadgets and firstmost a better suit of armor.

There were a couple of research fields he wanted to instantly expand on. These were ones that he wasn’t able to complete when he was just a tier 2 class holder. Yet to complement his fighting style he needed a few things. One of them would be reached by spatial rune research that was moving along smoothly. A lot depended on mastering dimensional storage as he was reliant on external equipment to make his new class shine. However, before going through with that, there was one other itch that he wanted to scratch.

“That should do it...”

Roland’s hammer collided with a piece of metal. It was a thick square plate made out of deep steel. Usually, it would have needed to be hammered down into something thinner but he was now working with tier 3 runes. Without proper materials that could take the increase in magic deterioration, he needed to increase the thickness. While he had some of the better ones saved up from farming the mine, he would not use them until his grasp of his new skill was adequate.

“This reminds me of the old days...”

This item before him was similar to the rough wand designs he made in the past. They were ugly in their appearance but nevertheless worked as intended. This thing before him contained a greater rune, the first one that he actually made. Ever since coming out of the trial, he was dreaming of this moment. Even before he reached tier 3 he had contemplated what he wanted to make, and each time his thoughts were drawn towards one thing, flight.

‘When you think about tier 3 mages, the floating spell is a staple.’

He remembered the time the Lich was chasing him and Armand’s party down in the dungeon. This iconic spell was used by the monster then allowing it to gently glide down without suffering any damage. The full name of the spell was levitation and it came in three variants, lesser, normal, and greater.

What the monster used was the lesser one which allowed a caster to support around their own body weight. Even the easiest version was a greater spell and each upgrade unlocked a little bit more variation. The normal levitation spell increased the weight load further and even allowed it to be used on multiple targets. It was one of those spells that made tier 3 mages a sought-after class down in dungeons. With so many caverns and places that were inaccessible without flight or climbing, it was a game changer.

This was something that he should be capable of doing. His levitation spell would be a bit different as he actually needed to support his armor along with his body. This spell was one of those that expanded on a mage's range superiority. It gave a mage some needed space between himself and the target. Yet due to the way it drained mana quickly it couldn't really be used for actual fighting. Otherwise, all mages would just turn to helicopters that rained down fire blasts from the sky in every war confrontation.

"Now to test it..."

Roland looked at the square piece of metal before him. While a regular person would only see a rune that resembled a fish with tiny symbols on the inside he could see a lot more. Many tiny traces went away from this rune and were integrated into the whole square block. These were the upgraded versions of Ethereal Pathways that he usually used to connect runic components on uneven materials. To him, they were like little shiny particles of light that made this cold piece of metal into quite the light show.

Finally, his first greater rune was activated and the block of metal started reacting. At first, it started shaking slightly but soon enough it started to rise up into the air. While the lesser levitation spell was the basis for this rune it was not the only thing in the structure. That spell in itself could only cancel out gravity and even work against it. Thus it would only allow something to either float up and down at slow speeds. This was not something that he was aiming for as Roland wanted to have something faster.

"The regular levitation spell is working, time to go into stage two... I hope this works."

Before continuing with the experiment he gave the floating cube a poke with his finger. It was a strange feeling to touch something that was just floating in the air. The cube really felt like it lost all of its weight. After shoving it around with just his index finger he decided to move away and behind some metal lining.

At the moment he was in the empty room where he usually tested his Runic Eye of Truth skill. To be safe he stuck a large plate of metal into the ground and surrounded it by some earth through magical means. There was a small slit left behind through which he could examine his creation and enough thickness to protect him from danger if the test went south.

It might have seemed that he was overdoing it just for a floating cube but he had a reason for it. While the levitation rune was quite basic and something that he had already been able to research, it wasn't the same for the adjustments he made. He would not be satisfied with only recreating spells into runic versions of them, what he wanted to do was to customize all of them to fit his needs. That was his true power, modification, and tinkering with the limits.

Thus he activated the runic program that he came up with for this occasion. Now that he was a tier 3 class holder he could do everything ten times as fast. One of the reasons for that was his stat multiplier

and the other was the Parallel Thinking trait that had been transformed into an advanced version. It allowed him to focus on many more things at once. When coupled with his heightened calculation capability it was as if he was working together with a team of researchers. Yet it wasn't really a skill that gave him multiple personalities or actual brains, it had its limitations.

The cube's side started to change color, from a pale blue that represented mana to a red. Following this change, it jolted to the side at a rapid speed. A burst of magical energy that was on the red side made it fly at an increased speed. Before it collided with a wall the red glow on one side died down and appeared on the other. A point of equilibrium was reached and it was able to stop before colliding with the wall.

This was the reason that he was looking from beyond this fortified location. He wasn't sure if the cube wouldn't just collide with the wall when activated and then explode. Thanks to his remote control skills he was able to control the cube by giving it simple orders. The operating system that it was running was still based on golemic creations and inside the cube was a tiny core handling all of the commands. Fitting in a runic battery was also a lot simpler now, as his and it was thanks to his upgraded version of the old Rune Compression skill.

Rune Miniaturisation L1

Skill Active

Allows the Runesmith to decrease the size of created runes along with all of its components.

This skill worked even on tier 3 runes while the previous Runic Compression one wouldn't. With it he was able to fit a lot of runic components into a smaller space. The skill was still only level one which meant that he would be able to fit more and more in as he advanced through his levels. Perhaps in the future, the runic batteries would be able to fit into a square cube of one centimeter.

"This went better than expected, could it be thanks to my calculation speed?"

There was an incident where his first golem exploded. This was mostly due to hasty planning and material limitations. After it, Roland was sure to run his calculations through a couple of times before actually building a prototype for anything. Thanks to the increase in brain power it was now possible for him to actually calculate all the possible failures. The floating cube before him was a testament to his new skills and a new weapon that was almost ready to be assembled.

"I should probably do something about the red glow, a capable fighter will probably be able to analyze it. Now, what should I do next..."

After grabbing the floating cube and deactivating it, he began to ponder. He could either continue assembling more prototypes for this type of weapon or begin drawing up the plans for the new armor. It would also be capable of some floating yet it wouldn't be proper flying. What he was aiming for was an enhancement to his movement. By lowering his weight he would be able to jump quite high. This would allow him to move out of trouble without burning through all of his mana.

"Oh hey boss, are you done? Was there...another accident?"

"Berning? No, nothing broke this time around."

“Really? That’s good to hear.”

As he was walking out of his new temporary training area he met Bernir. Out of the corner of his eye, he could see the young Jorg working on some in the ground. The room he was occupying was the large chamber where they performed most of the weapon tests. At the time being it was riddled with holes and the dummies had been destroyed.

“Will you tell me what you were testing in there?”

“Oh, it was just some stuff...”

Roland didn’t want to tell him that the devastation was due to his class advancement. After getting all those various skills and body enhancement he went through some tests. The testing room's devastated look was due to using his new gained power, a power that he hoped to use to protect his home.

“If you say so, at least Jorg will have something to do, I bet his skills will be leveling fast!”

“That is true...”

Roland glanced at the half-dwarven youth patching up the place while thinking of what he had learned. Perhaps he had no new armor yet, but the class that he was using was quite ferocious even without his equipment. He could only wonder how tremendous of a leap he would take after assembling everything that he wanted...