

## Runesmith 33

### [Chapter 33 Returning to Edelgard](#)

“Huh?”

A man about the age of 25 opened up his eyes. He had fallen down from what seemed to be a gaming chair. He was in a small apartment that only had one room that connected to a tiny bathroom. The whole place looked messy and unkempt.

“What was I doing?”

He stood up, his eyes felt heavy. He felt as if he had been sleeping for days. Dazed and confused he glanced around. The room around him seemed familiar yet distant at the same time.

He looked around, the apartment was badly kept and dirty clothes that were rolled up into a ball were thrown in the corner. A half-eaten microwaved pizza was to the side along with some soda. This drink had long lost its carbonated properties and now would taste like sugar water.

The man rubbed his head as he sat back in his chair. He felt like he was forgetting something, something important. He remembered returning from a hard day’s work while almost getting run over by a truck. Then he started playing some games.

‘I must have fallen asleep while playing...?’

He thought to himself while looking at his PC screen. Instead of seeing a game on it, he saw a pitch-black monitor. He leaned forward to his mouse, maybe his computer had gone into sleeping mode after he dozed off. The moment he jolted his mouse the screen flickered and something appeared, something that didn’t look like a game.

“What the?”

He saw an image of an ant, it looked awfully realistic and somehow more monstrous than a regular insect. The image on the screen looked at him as it moved. He moved his head to the left and the large ant’s head moved to face him. His first thought was that it was some kind of new gaming feature. Things like eye tracking weren’t new, the strange part was that he wasn’t wearing anything for the program to track his head movement. He didn’t even have a webcam on his computer and he wasn’t wearing his VR headset either.

While he was thinking an odd occurrence took place. He saw that the ant’s head started pushing through the large flat computer screen as if it was trying to tear through it. He instantly jumped back in panic falling down from his chair yet again.

After some pushing, the monster ant’s head finally burst through the 32-inch screen. The thing gave out a massive loud wail that caused all the windows in his apartment to shatter. He moved up his right hand to protect himself but he spotted something wrong, he couldn’t move it at all.

The man looked to where his arm was and saw it mangled up. It looked as if he put it in a garbage disposal, his fingers were all bent out of shape and the pain was unbearable. Before he could register this the monster ant’s head moved closer, its giant mandibles opened up in front of his face and they chomped down on his head.

“Nooooooooooooo!”

A youth in a black robe shot forward, his loud scream alerting the people next to him.

“Hey, calm down.”

Roland’s eyes went wide, he wasn’t sure what was happening. His first instinct was to look to his right arm. He remembered activating the barely tested scroll that he made. It was a yet unreliable product that he supersized after making a smaller version. He used the whole pelt from a monster sheep that was used for regular spell scrolls along with some better magic ink.

He created the runic spell by jerry-rigging as many fire arrow runes onto the pelt as possible. He managed to connect them all together with the magical pathways and fixed it all up with his debugging skill. What was created was a haphazard runic spell scroll that overloaded when you tried casting it, the backlash from activating it was the reason his arm almost exploded.

At least that was what he thought had happened but for some reason, his arm looked mostly fine now. His fingers weren’t disfigured or gone and the burn scars were faint. He looked to the side and finally realized that he was in a moving carriage, his party members were sitting there and looking at him.

“Quite th’ girly scream ye git thare laddie.”

Dalrak the dwarf laughed out loud while Orson sniggered on the side. Helci looked at the two men with narrowed eyes and even gave Orson a shove. The young man just sniggered further.

“Hey! Stop making fun of him, he almost died!”

Roland’s face showed lines forming between the eyebrows while he tilted his head to the side. Helci looked to him with a slight smile on her face as she explained what happened after he had used that spell scroll of his.

“After you passed out the Myrmeke Queen...”

Apparently the spell worked and the Queen ant backed away into the mine, due to its size the tunnel collapsed right after the monster retreated. Roland had passed out, Orson carried him to safety over his shoulder like a sack of potatoes. The adventurer’s outside were already waiting for them. The two explosions that they caused to blow up the wall alerted them to their presence. Wells the expedition leader was really surprised to see them there all alive with only Roland being injured.

He was then healed by the tier 2 priest that had tagged along on this expedition. The priest had advanced healing miracles which allowed Roland’s fingers to be patched up. The reason that they were in a carriage now was that they were heading back to Edelgard.

“So the expedition leader ordered a retreat after realizing that there was a tier 3 Myrmeke Queen in the mine?”

“In short, yes.”

Helci nodded while relying on the information. This made sense as the tier 2 team would probably have a hard time against a tier 3 monster. To bring down a monster at that level they would probably need a

full party of equally strong tier 3 classes. Monsters tended to be stronger than their human counterparts and the gap widened on the higher tiers.

“Well done back thare laddie, couldnae have made it back witoot ye”

Dalrak said while giving Roland a manly smack to the back, this caused the youth to almost face plant into the wooden carriage floor. He was slowly getting fed up with these people smacking his back all the time.

“Yeah great job kid, what was up with that spell anyway?”

Orson asked while everyone stared. Roland had made quite an impression on the adventurers here, some of them were even thinking that he was a tier 2 in disguise.

“Ah, it was just a spell scroll I bought. It’s not like I can cast those myself.”

From the standpoint of these adventurers, this had to mean that Roland was someone rich. There was no way a normal person would have so many common grade spell scrolls on him of various elemental affinities. He had to either have some kind of connections or be the son of a rich merchant, maybe even a noble in disguise. They would of course not pry into his business but it was something they would remember.

“Hey, if you need advice on some of the shops in the flower district, come find me in the guild. I can introduce you to all the best girls, they’ll take care of ya, just say that big brother Orson sent you.”

Roland had a blank look on his face while he was listening to Orson talking about the flower district. This was how the city’s red-light district was called. The warrior was probably thinking that he was giving the youth some sound big brotherly advice. The young boy that was actually a person over thirty wasn’t as appreciative. He could only shake his head while Orson talked about his passion. The dwarf even started butting in, he tried to sell Roland on the dwarf girls yet again. These two were quite the pervy duo apparently and they seemed to be hitting it off together.

“That’s why men are...”

Helci had a big frown on her face as she listened to these idiots talking about the red light district. They were even giving the youth some insider knowledge with her right next to them. She did find it odd that Roland wasn’t interested at all, he wasn’t even blushing as a normal kid his age should be.

Roland just ignored that horny duo and thought back to what transpired today. He had gotten himself trapped in a closed mine and even the people in his expedition were working against him. If they didn’t blow up the exits he might have been able to get out of there without a mangled hand. He believed that the queen ant wouldn’t have noticed them if they weren’t blowing up the wall to the closed-off mine shafts.

Somehow he managed to survive. still, he had to rely on others to get to safety just like before. If he was alone he would have probably died in that passage, if not by the Queen’s hand then by the rubble. He had prepared more this time still, it was not enough. He underestimated the danger yet again and had almost suffered the consequences.

Roland knew that there wasn't enough data, like the monster type or where they were specifically located. Helci's team on the other hand did the right thing and stayed clear from this one. He would have to take things more seriously or quit being an adventurer whatsoever. This was a failure in his eyes, with only one good thing coming out of it which was his runic mastery skill level.

There were so many ants there and he had used up most of his runic spell scrolls. He didn't need to kill monsters to level up his runic mastery, hitting them was enough. He was looking at a maxed out basic rune mastery. He had killed some tier 2 monsters and also landed a devastating blow on the Myrmeke Queen with his unconventional scroll. This was apparently enough to level this tier 1 class skill up really fast.

He wasn't the only one from the party that had gained a lot from this expedition. Everyone had multiple mana stones in their possessions and they killed a lot of monsters which allowed them to get a lot of experience. Helci had the biggest jump in levels, from a measly tier 1 level 10 all the way up to level 23. She would be soon allowed to get another tier 1 class and join the steel adventurer ranks.

Roland had gained two levels throughout the whole encounter. He might have even maxed out his class if it wasn't a crafting profession. The rune mastery skill it had was unconventional for the type of class it was. He was banking on it unlocking better job options in the future, them not necessarily being other tier 1 classes.

"Thanks for pulling me out."

Roland spoke out towards his party members who were arguing about women's busts again. He at least had to thank them for getting him out of there, he wouldn't have been able to survive otherwise. The guys laughed a bit, the elf remained in his spot as he just kept looking outside the carriage. Helci blushed slightly, unused to getting thanked by others.

They returned to Edelgard in one piece, the journey back always seemed faster and he also was out cold for half of it. They wouldn't be needing to make any kind of reports to the guild as Wells was responsible for that. They had to pull back due to the miss report that the mine manager gave them so they wouldn't suffer any fees for an incomplete job. If they would be getting all of the rewards from the mine owner was unknown, they might have to walk away without getting paid anything.

This wasn't something Roland cared that much for though. His main profession was a crafter, he had gained some mana stones that he could sell. He also gained a lot of experience and could now evaluate where his strengths and weaknesses lay.

For one this large pelt scroll that he came up with needed some protective measures. Maybe if he attached a barrier spell to cover his body during its activation it could mitigate the damage he would potentially receive to his hand.

He also realized how limited this style of combat was. If they didn't find an exit and had to wait there, his scrolls would run out eventually. He would have to rely on his regular spells that were much weaker or his own close-range fighting capabilities. He might have to train his combat skills up, most of them were stagnant after he got used to his backline support position.

This and a few other things needed adjusting. He hopped out from the carriage and stretched out his sore body. He was still surprised about the power of healing, his arm felt brand new and he could

vaguely tell where the burn marks started. A healer could cast this spell which would normally cost you quite the penny if you bought a common grade recovery potion.

“Well, ah will be seeing ye aroond.”

Dalrak packed up all of his gear and said his goodbyes.

“Been interesting ya bastards. Hey, wait up dwarf!”

He and Orson had apparently bonded over booze and women on the trip here. Maybe they would be forming a party of their own soon.

“Farewell, if destiny wills it, our paths will cross again.”

Selinar said his one-liner and then walked away, his long golden hair dancing in the wind as he strutted away without looking back, his bow over his shoulder. The only ones remaining now were Roland and Helci.

“They were quite the odd bunch...”

Roland muttered out while Helci nodded.

“And you’re not odd at all?”

“Me? What’s odd about me?”

The girl just rolled her eyes and moved forward. She wanted to go to the guild and sell the mana stones she gathered. After Orson ‘took’ that dead adventurer’s spatial bag, everyone agreed on giving it to Helci as she lacked her own. She was now richer and could probably afford better armor and better weapons for her next adventure.

“What?”

Roland raised his eyebrow as the girl didn’t answer and just started walking away. After a while she just turned around and started waving, a smile plastered all over her face.

“See you later ‘mage’ Roland, if you’re ever in need of a scout you can come find me at the guild!”

“Yeah, see you around.”

Roland just nodded, he wasn’t sure if he would ever meet the girl in the future. After working as an adventurer she seemed to not be as bipolar as before. She still sometimes had some angry outbursts but it was mostly focused on Orson that liked to butt heads with her.

He himself went back to his lodgings. He had ditched the old room and found himself something bigger. His bed and mattress were now half decent and he left most of his work-related stuff back at the store.

He laid out the contents of his spatial bag on the table. There were various sizes of mana stones there. Ones the size of fingernails and larger at the size of a marble. The larger ones belonged to the tier 2 soldier type and while the lower ones to the workers.

He wasn’t sure if he wanted to sell these yet. Supposedly things like magic ink that he used for the scrolls was somehow also manufactured with these as a resource. Some weapons even used these

stones as a power source that could be later recharged. He was going to be fashioning weapons like that in the future, so not selling these would probably save him some money in the long run.

Roland glanced at his status screen, he only needed to get a couple of levels and he would be able to switch to his third tier 1 class. There was another path he could take, getting a tier 2 class instead which would give him the 1.5x multiplier to his stats and would make him a lot stronger than before.

He wondered how fast other people got to those tier 2 classes and if it was worth not to gain more levels with the tier 1 classes instead. His future progress might be stunted if he didn't unlock more skills.

'Three levels, shouldn't take more than a couple of months of scroll crafting.'

He nodded to himself, he already spent a lot of time crafting scrolls. This would put him at a year into his contract. There was a bit of a problem he was afraid of. When he switched to a blacksmith class, he would need to drop one of his class bonuses.

He might have to give up the bonuses his scribe class provided. It gave him bonuses to mana regeneration and it lowered his mana consumption while crafting scrolls. He had a large pool of mana as it was but he burned through it quite fast when crafting. His mage class also gave him more mana as well as mana regeneration, which was best for crafting he would have to see.

This was something that he would tackle on a later occasion. He had gone through quite the adventure and he was really tired. The carriage wasn't a place that he could sleep and he mostly remained awake for the rest of the journey home. He still had some days off and he would use them to sleep it off. After he recovered he would grind till the next class change and finally get his blacksmith class.

### [Chapter 34 Time to become a blacksmith?](#)

Edelgard was a large city, it was considered prosperous in the kingdom and was renowned for its crafting professions. A lot of the country's magical equipment was manufactured right here. An item with the quality seal coming from here was most of the time guaranteed to sell and bring in coins.

These coins were being regulated by the merchant council as well as by the noble house that was here. The nobles mostly kept their noses out of the merchant business and only required them to pay taxes. This was natural as most of the aristocrats were busy with other things, like attending parties, acquiring merits, and gaining favor with people in a higher position like the duke houses or the royal family.

In a well-lit room, there were six people sitting around a round table. Two chairs were empty but this didn't stop them from speaking. This was a gathering of the rich merchants that were the largest business owners in the city. Some had others deal with things like this by sending proxies, one of those people was the Gnome manager that Roland was affiliated with.

"Blasted mine cost me a fortune, how did a myrmeke infestation spread there, this makes no sense!"

A large dwarf with a bit of a tummy to him was slamming his large hand on the table. This hand had various golden rings on it just as his beard did.

"Just some bad luck?~"

Replied an elven woman whose skin color was dark. She was a moon elf, she had a cigarette holder in her right hand and some pink smoke was coming out of the end of the bud. She was squeezed into a

black dress that showed quite a lot of cleavage. She looked to be a young beauty but her age was several times above this dwarf.

“Clam up Lilatah!” (Shut up, Lilatah!)

The angry dwarf replied while spitting out saliva in rage.

“You should watch that temper Mr. Thardur, maybe I should reserve a night with one of my girls for you, I’ll be sure to give you a good price~”

The woman smirked while leaning over to show off some more of that cleavage. The dwarf clicked with his tongue and leaned back in his chair as he started to calm down.

“This doesn’t mak’ na sense, ye kno that dose monsters don’t wander near places close tae water. Mah mines haes a lairge river next tae it, someone mist hae lured thaim thare! ”

The dwarf voiced his concerns. The mine was far too close to a large body of water, the ants should have reacted to the moisture in the ground and evaded the area like the plague.

“Yes, this does feel fishy...”

The one answering was the Gnome manager that Roland was working for.

“Haven’t strange things been happening lately?”

The people quieted down and started mumbling. The mine disaster that caused the big headache for this dwarf wasn’t the only thing that was out of place.

“Yes, my convoys have been getting attacked lately, more than usually I even had to pay out of hand for more bodyguards!”

Another member of the council answered.

“Someone put poison in one of the dishes in my restaurant when one of the nobles was visiting, they almost tore down the whole place!”

Another person that owned a lot of food-related businesses voiced his concerns. There had been a lot of irregularities happening in this city since half a year ago. The mine incident was the most high profile one as it left a big body count and the adventurer guild even had to get involved.

“Someone trying tae muscle in oan oor turf?”

“Possibly but who would be so shameless? We have the backing of the noble families could it be...”

The gnome stopped talking as he looked at the council members. It was possible that one of them was doing this. Even if one of their businesses was hit it could easily have been a distraction. If they started bleeding money someone could very easily just move in and buy them out for close to nothing.

Even in his stores that he had spread through the city were getting hit, mostly by people complaining about the items failing and asking for returns. This in term tarnished the store’s good name and brought fewer customers that went to others to do their purchases. It wasn’t that bad at the moment but could become a problem if it continued.

The council discussed some more rumors but they didn't come to any consensus. Everyone soon dispersed and they just agreed to keep an eye out for potential spies and sabotage. They could easily have the authorities work for them if they found out who was messing with their businesses.

The gnome manager was now sitting in a carriage with his elf attendant Zilyana. The gnome continued speculating about the real mastermind behind this. After some time Roland's involvement in the mine expedition was mentioned and the conversation switched to him.

"The boy's work has been selling well, it was a good thing that he signed up with us. It's going to take a while till he develops further, the scrolls he makes are a hot commodity..."

The elf woman that worked at the store was here as well. She praised Roland's work mentioning the great sales. The only problem was that the scrolls were still only a common grade item and the stock was very limited. The number he could make in a month's time brought in some money but it wasn't really that much in the grand scheme of things.

The gnome nodded as the elf spoke. Since the youth returned from the mine expedition about five months ago he had been working tirelessly. He unloaded quite the sizable number of spell scrolls onto him. He was clearly some kind of prodigy as he was able to craft the highest quality common spell scrolls.

He had thought that he would be a one-trick pony and continue making runic fire arrows but he was wrong. He could scribe all of the elemental arrow types, he even gave him scrolls to sell as a bundle and explained how they worked together. One of them was the combination of wind, water, and ice that could simulate a tier 3 blizzard spell quite well and freeze opponents in a wide area.

The profits from the runic scrolls were sizable but at most, he outworked five regular mana scribes. He wasn't a runesmith quite yet and the real money was in creating reusable gear for adventurers or the country's soldiers. If you managed to fetch a good commission from the noble lords to outfit their army you could make more than by selling too sparse adventurers.

"Aye, the brat is working hard he even requested smithing books from me..."

The gnome said while the elf woman smiled.

"He is going to change classes again already..."

The two were baffled by Roland's progress, they figured that he couldn't be an ordinary person just by the fact that he already had his second class when he was eleven. There were certain ways to increase your experience besides killing monsters and crafting.

"You think he used blood crystals, manager? He doesn't seem like the type."

"Didn't have the telltale signs of using them, probably not."

The gnome replied while lighting up his pipe. The elven woman cringed a bit as she saw her boss do this, not being a fan of smokers to say the least.

"We have him for another two years, so we can watch him closely, don't think he is a security risk."

Zilyana said with a resounding nod.



“Should I do some digging? The people that complained at our shop were a dead end, they didn’t seem to know much even when I ‘asked’ them nicely~”

The elf woman smirked a bit as she recounted how she investigated the people that were trying to return their items back to the store. They were unusually loud while doing it as if they were told to make a scene. They haven’t been hit that hard like the rest, nothing as a poisoning incident or a monster attack at the mine happened just yet.

“Tighten the security, whoever this is they are being careful. Might be one of the council members or even the nobles... could also be an unknown third party that is trying to move in. Have our people report any major buyouts happening...”

The two continued talking while riding the carriage back towards their residence. Edelgard was considered a large city of half a million people. The meeting place was on the other side of the city so they would need half an hour to get back.

“Well then, I’ll be off first. Another little mouse appeared again...”

Zilyana said while grinning, her body started turning dark and it soon turned into black smoke. She vanished from within the carriage that she occupied with the gnome. He just continued to smoke, there was no reaction on his face to the strange occurrence as if it was something that he saw many times before. The faint screams that were heard afterward didn’t garner a reaction either.

“Wished she didn’t always leave such a mess behind, tired of paying off the guards all the time...”

The manager blew out some smoke through his nose while the moon shone brightly in the night.

In another place, a different scene was playing out. A certain human youth was reading a large book, a large pile of them was to the side. He was going through the pages quite fast and his eyes were moving through the letters at a rapid pace. He finally placed it down on the table where the stack of the others was.

“Think that’s all...”

Roland rubbed his eyes that were slightly tired and glanced at his status screen.

Name :

Roland Arden L 50

Classes:

T1 Mage L25 [ Secondary ]

T1 Runic Mana Scribe L 25 [ Main ]

HP

413/413

MP

2144/2144

SP

496/496

Strength

29

Agility

33

Dexterity

72

Vitality

32

Endurance

31

Intelligence

105

Willpower

80

Charisma

14

Luck

7

He went through his stats and skills, he had gathered quite a lot of them through these years. He wasn't able to rise all of them to level 9, there was just not enough time for all of that. He had to focus on his main skills like the ones for mana manipulation and crafting. He had managed to get his runic mastery up to the limit as well as both his mana scribing and runic scribing skill.

He was now ready for the next step, he was only worried that there could be something more. When he wanted to change into the mana scribe a variation of the class appeared, this was his current runic mana scribe class.

He had read up in the blacksmith class, there wasn't much to get past the class change trial. Normally you just needed to craft something, it would be something easy at first like a horseshoe or some of the basic blacksmithing tools like an S-hook. It was a simple tool for hanging your other tools and for various other things around the smithy.

Making those basic things wouldn't be much of a problem for Roland. His stats were already above what a beginner level 1 blacksmith should have. This class required a lot of strength though, this was one of the attributes that he lacked the most. In contrast, if he went for a more artisan like class that made smaller parts, his high dexterity would be quite useful. He wasn't planning to be a goldsmith to make gold rings and necklaces though.

The only slight fear that he had was that there would be a different class option like the last time. This would be good news but he still could fail his class change quest and waste two small gold coins while at it. He gave out a sigh and looked at the crystal that activated the strange dimension that had his old apartment in it.

"Well... if I fail I'll just do it again."

He nodded to himself. He had read all the smithing related books that he could find. There were also some basic rune smithing books there but they didn't go into much detail about how runecrafting or runic inscriptions. Roland grasped the class changing stone and stared at it before activating it as he did before.

He arrived in the usual spot at the bottom of the apartment building. The outside looked dead as always, he just turned around and walked slowly upstairs. His room was the same and he went straight to the computer. He heard the fans turning on and the system asking him for his password the same as before.

"Hm... there are a lot of them this time..."

After going straight to the program that showed him the possible classes he started looking through them. There were the usual tier 1 classes like archer, warrior, scout there but just as he expected there were some tier 2 classes available now.

'Advanced Mana scribe....Advanced Runic Mana Scribe are there...'

He leveled up both of his scribing skills to the max and along with the skills that he had from his mage class. He reasoned that this was enough to allow him to change to these classes. He felt like going with the tier 2 advanced runic mana scribe class wouldn't be such a bad idea.

He looked through the side of the window that should have the more magical classes and frowned, there really weren't any tier 2 mage classes available. He was hoping that something like a 'Rune Mage' class would appear but apparently, that wasn't the case. He turned his gaze to the other side where the blacksmith class was the last time he went through a class change.

To no surprise it was still there, it showed an icon of a pixelated version of him. The pixel art was wearing the usual blacksmith apparel along with a large hammer. Instead of the walking animation, it was showing him sitting down and hammering a large anvil. He started looking to the sides just as he suspected it was there.

Roland's mouth curled up slightly, the name of the class that he was hoping to get was similar to the one he currently had.

'Runic Blacksmith...'

He gave out a sigh, he wasn't sure what he would be able to craft with this class in his position but he should at least be able to inscribe some runes on metal.

'Wait... does that mean there is a Runic Runesmith class after this?'

He paused a bit before thinking, would a Runic Runesmith add something to a class that was already working with runes? He might have been overthinking this. Maybe he wouldn't even need to take that class to forge runes.

'What if there are runic variations of all the smithing classes and I can skip the tier 2 one altogether?'

He thought to himself, he had a theory that if he would be getting certain rune related skills now that the runesmith class only had then he might be able to skip it. There could also be a better version of this class waiting for him. He continued thinking before finally snapping out of it. He needed to first finish this class change quest before he could think about the tier 2 classes.

He scanned the other classes with his eyes that could become available to him and to his surprise there were others. Runic Archer, Runic Warrior all littered the interface and could be taken by him. He believed that these classes would probably only lower the usage of mana with rune weapons and wouldn't actually differ much from the regular versions of those classes.

They probably became available after he leveled up his runic mastery and might not offer that much to him in the long run. If he went with that route he would have wasted time with crafting runes and would have to switch to melee combat. He might be able to fight better with runic gear but it was still better to customize it yourself.

Roland finally made up his mind and clicked on the Runic Blacksmith variant that was available to him. The usual VR headset popped out and he put it right on just like last time he was transported into another area.

The place looked like a regular blacksmith's workshop like he saw in the city. It wasn't all that large but he could see it had all the things required for one. The forge, water barrel, and quench tank were close to each other, the tool rack with the basic smithing tools like tongs and hammers was all there. The anvil was right in the middle and a bit further away was the workbench with a book on it.

He walked up to it while remembering his first class change mission that was similar to this setup. Just as before he needed to read through it to get the temporary skills and then craft the required item. He spotted a large hourglass in the corner that was already counting down the time. He moved forward and grabbed the large book, he hoped to get an easy item for crafting like some nails. He received an unexpected thing instead, this even prompted him to raise an eyebrow.

'How to forge a ladle of lesser fire resistance.'