

## **The Runesmith #Chapter 4 Making some progress. - Read The Runesmith Chapter 4 Making some progress. Online -**

This was unexpected, it was as if he played the Uno reverse card and flipped his social status around. The next day a person came to check upon him. His Father stood true to his word and brought someone over to test if he had talent in magic, it was apparently one of the more rare gifts in this world.

Roland thought that they might try reading his status screen in some way. That would in turn reveal his circuit and debugging related skills. Luckily, you had to have an evolved version of the identifying skill to be actually able to that. This cost a lot so his father opted out for a lesser measuring item in the shape of an orb. It tested someone's aptitude in some way and gave out a faint blue glow which indicated that Roland did indeed have the mentioned mana sense skill.

His life got flipped-turned upside down, he was suddenly accepted into the family inner circle together with the other kids. His living quarters were moved and even the servants were bowing at him now. The same couldn't be said for the other sons though. They all saw him as an eyesore, they were quite competitive and prideful.

Still, he was the only one from the family with this so-called talent. This meant more work though, he received many new books on how to train his skills. He didn't get a tutor for one reason or the other but he suspected that even with this, he was still considered only slightly more useful. He was aware that he could lose his newfound standing quite fast if he slacked off.

'Man, this world is harsh... the only thing I'm doing is studying and then training... this is worse than staying overtime for work! This is slave labor!'

His day consisted mostly of reading books and training his mana skill to a higher level. He received bonuses to his intelligence and they told him that he needed to max it out before his ascension ritual. What was an ascension ritual you might ask? It was something that happened when a child reached the age of 10.

From what he knew he would be given something called an 'ascension stone'. After his 10th birthday, it would finally be usable and reward him with his first class. Apparently it was quite strange, the person using it would be brought to some strange location where this 'ritual' took place. From what it said in the books the rituals might differ depending on the individuals, but he would receive the first class automatically without being able to choose it himself.

That's why it was important to train the skills that were required for tier 1 class you wanted. Yes, classes came in Tiers. The most basic Tier 1 classes that existed were: Warrior, Archer, Mage, Thief, Blacksmith, and Acolyte. There were of course more, but

these were the most common ones that most of the people received. There were mostly separated into combat classes and production classes then further into more specialized categories like support classes.

This wasn't the end though. Those Acesion Stones could be bought and used repeatedly, each time you would be taken to that strange place. Though apparently after the first freebie you would need to go through a trial. Depending on your stats and skills you could unlock other classes, the requirements for unlocking tier 2 classes varied. The minimum requirement was maxing out at least one tier 1 class.

The mage class relied on intelligence and willpower to cast spells. Int for better attack and more mana, while willpower apparently allowed for better concentration during spellcasting and increased mana regeneration. The basic books he was learning from didn't go into too much detail and his family wouldn't be spending more cash on him until after his ascension ritual.

'Still... I'm going to be a damn mage, why should the next mage king do this kind shit?'

Roland grumbled while doing pushups, an angry-looking man was looking at him. This was a soldier that was working for the Baron and his personal trainer. The Baron whose name was Wentworth Arden was a muscle head through and through.

'What kind of name is Wentworth?'

His father was a military man as well, so he wanted all of his children to have basic training. This mostly consisted of endurance and muscle building training along with basic swordsmanship. His life consisted of waking up, eating, training in the morning than reading books, and training his mana.

This was one of these days, he was doing some basic strength training like pushups, squats, and then pull-ups. His regiment consisted of bodyweight exercises as he was still only a five year old. His older brother that was eight was running some laps and smirking in his direction.

'What you looking at you brat, when I get that mage class I'll stick a lightning bolt up your ass!'

Roland panted while faceplanting into the dusty ground. His physical stats were abysmal, this was probably why his magic-related stats were so good. His male siblings for some reason loved seeing him get mistreated, he didn't know why but he attributed it to them being spoiled noble brats. They probably saw him as someone beneath them, after he gained some clout with the Baron they resented him even more.

'Okay, the moment I get the chance I'm running away from this devil hole...'

He groaned while the man that was training him gave him a nudge with his foot.

"That wasn't even ten, get up! This is a disgrace to the Arden name!"

He was constantly reminded that he was part of the noble cast now. He was supposed to be part of the fabled 1% now, it sure didn't feel like that though. His living conditions improved slightly, but if he had to compare it to how people lived back on Earth, it was worse here.

Still, he was gaining new skills. After some running, he got the running skill, if he did some sprints he received the sprint skill. After doing some basic hand to hand combat drills he received basic punching skills. This made the whole progression more bearable as you had something to look forward to.

He was a gamer back in his older life, so this gave his dopamine receptors a nudge. Which in turn made him want to increase those basic physical skills. What more, the higher the skills the better he became. The moment he received one he instantly felt the change, he could run faster, jump higher, and punch harder. He would even receive bonuses to his endurance and strength stats if he leveled up these skills high enough.

'This is slightly addicting...'

He said while looking up in the air. He was sitting on his bed and looking at the glowing fog around him. His mana sense skill was already at level 3 at this point. This skill didn't do much besides letting him see the mana around him. It looked like a faint blue fog, but he couldn't really do anything with it. Leveling this skill only widened the range of his mana sense and made the fog slightly more distinct.

'Well, from the books I read. I should get this to level 10 before the ascension ceremony and I'm almost guaranteed a mage class.'

'I will gain some skills directly from the mage class at L 1, ones that will help me shape mana and expel mana, or ones that will let me absorb more and raise my mana regeneration.'

He balanced a pen between his nose and upper lip and looked outside. There were two moons shining brightly, one was red and the other was blue. This was a reminder that he was really in another world. His family was gone, all of his old friends too, everyone here felt like a stranger.

He didn't feel like he could bond with them either, his so-called parent was distant. He only gave him attention the moment he found out that he had a rare skill. He knew people like that back from Earth, the ones that only stay with you till you are useful to them. When your usefulness runs out they will drop you like a sack of potatoes.

'I really need to get out of here, this mage thing is supposedly very prestigious so if all goes right I will be able to pave my own path.'

He wanted nothing more than to leave in peace. He was starting to hate being caught up with others, he just wanted to be left in peace and do things at his own pace.

'Wonder what a mage actually does for a living... will I have to participate in monster subjugations... or wars?'

He tried thinking back to a couple of RPG's he used to play. In most of those some kind of 'chosen one' set off on a quest with a party of adventurers. The most basic one was the one where you defeated some powerful monster like a demon king.

'Me a hero huh?... That probably won't happen...'

He gave out a sigh and dropped the pen. He was tired and bruised, the idiot of a drill instructor had given him a couple of good whacks with a stick when he was taking his time while running.

'Uh, will I need to do this for the next five years?'

He grumbled while fading away into dreamland, a life of peace and laziness on his mind.

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A dark-haired boy with green eyes was standing by a big tree, he was wearing casual clothes and his face was dirty. The youth took a large breath in and then tossed himself onto the broad tree trunk. His hands and feet started shuffling back and forth as he headed upwards as he climbed the tree. In a matter of seconds, he managed to get up to one of the larger branches.

He wasn't done apparently as he quickly slid down and repeated this procedure about ten times before he heard a familiar voice.

This was a slightly older Roland, half a year had passed since he got here. He had been testing this skill and level based system for some time now and came to some conclusions. From what he knew, a person couldn't get many skills before going through the ascension ritual. A vast majority of them were the 'basic' type.

'Fifty times huh? I guess it's not a ten-time multiplier...'

Roland rubbed his chin, he had trained his climbing tree on this exact same tree from level 1. After getting up the first time, he had earned basic climbing at L1, after the next ten tries he was at L2, then after fifty times he got it up to level 3 now.

'Not everything can become a skill though...'

He had tried various approaches, he had a small ball and he tried tossing it up against the wall multiple times to see if he would gain some kind of throwing skill but it didn't work. Then he gave it another try with a rock and a training dummy and was able to attain a basic rock-throwing skill.

'Might have something to do with the way I was throwing it, or with the item being a toy and a rock might be considered a projectile or a weapon?'

He came to the conclusion that most of the skills you could gain were used for combat in some way. He needed to throw a spear to get a 'basic spear-throwing' skill, but for some reason couldn't achieve the same by throwing a stick that wasn't accepted by the system as a weapon.

'It's a little bit vague, also think there is a clear achievement-based system working in the back that levels the skills up when you pass the threshold.'

He had tested the climbing skill just for that reason. The level up points was at 1, 10, and then 50. The further you went, the harder it was to level up a skill.

'Wonder if I climb a taller tree if the time required to level up the skill will change...'

Martha was standing to the side while holding her cheek. She had been watching her young master climbing up various trees and scribbling something down into a notebook. At some point he would stop and look at the things he wrote down, his eyes would narrow or bulge out in an odd way.

"Young master has become quite active lately, I should add more meat to his diet!"

The woman went away to do some chores while Roland continued testing the skills, he had become quite infamous among the servants. People started finding him hiding in the closets or sneaking into the basement. When they asked him about an explanation he always replied that he was testing new skills.

His older brothers started ignoring him after they saw him try to scale the mansion walls while muttering something about a strange monster called a truck.

More time passed and Roland had learned most of the basic skills that he considered useful and easy to pick up. There was one thing that was bothering him and that were the skills that he was sent to this world with. Even after testing, he couldn't figure out what his Circuitry or Debugging skills could be useful for.

The third one that was Tinkering proved useful when he tried rearranging a clock. He never worked with clocks, but he somehow knew where the parts should fit in. He didn't believe this was the work of the circuitry skill as circuits and cogs in a clock weren't even close.

The application of mana sense was also something he couldn't figure out. There was also that thing where the original host of the body died due to trying to absorb the mana fog in the surrounding. After further research, he concluded that before reaching a mage or acolyte class this was impossible and would result in mana poisoning.

'No one explained it to the original kid... I guess I'll have to wait with any magic-related testing after I'm older...'

Roland wanted to start playing with mana, who wouldn't? This path was blocked, for now, so he focused on other things.

His identify skill went up the more he read or identified things, the sleep resistance was also self-explanatory. After the youth had gained a plethora of basic skills like sprinting, climbing, throwing he looked into other things. One of these things was class-related skills concerning crafting. He had the tinkering skill, so maybe he could learn to smith or work the forge?

"Y-young master if the Baron finds out... you can't learn class skills like this, the Baron will be mad..."

Roland was now standing with a mallet in his hand hitting it against some heated up iron. He had gone over to the blacksmith that was working and used his name of one of the Baron's son's to force the blacksmith to teach him something about crafting. This didn't go the way he had planned though as he wasn't getting any skills from hitting the heated up horseshoes.

'Maybe I'm missing a step?'

"Hey, what's the most basic Blacksmith skill..."

He was sure he would gain some basic skills if he worked with the smelter, or if he hammered away at heated metal. For some reason he wasn't getting anything at all, all the other basic skills were a lot easier to unlock at L 1.

"Master Roland, if you don't unlock the Blacksmith class you can't learn any smithing skills."

Apparently, the only skills he could gain just like before, were ones related to combat. The only hammer related skills he could get were ones related to fighting proficiencies.

'This doesn't make much sense... maybe the people or gods that developed this didn't want to have child labor or something?'

In the end, the Baron found out that Roland was spending his time working at the forge. He was forced to abandon his smithing testing after they proved ineffective. He was also forbidden from doing tasks like this as they were unfitting of a noble's son.

Time moved on, Roland kept training his basic skills to their maximum while trying not to die from boredom. Doing repeatable tasks like this just to hear the system ding wasn't as rewarding as one might think.

Then his ninth birthday came, he didn't receive any presents though, he got something else entirely.

Roland looked at the sharp object in his hand, it was a short sword fashioned out of steel. He was about 140 cm's now, quite tall for a 9-year-old child. He glanced at the weapon he was holding, his identifying skill even giving him some basics.

'Yeah... that helps a lot...'

Why was he holding a weapon for killing people you might ask? Also, why was he in a dim-lit room with a green looking creature looking with at him with those beady eyes? The Baron liked to keep his boys on a tight leash, he was just 1 year short of receiving his ascension. The house of Arden had a tradition, a very bloody one. Children that reached the age of 9 were to take a certain test of bravery.

He was taken to the mansion's dungeon, in there he was presented his opponent. This was something commonly seen in these kinds of fantasy worlds, but for Roland, this was a first. The people around here were all humans, if he didn't see this creature today he might have believed that they were the only race around.

There it was, green and ugly, and even shorter than him at about 120 cm of height. It looked angry and was holding a short blade similar to his, just a lot rustier. In comparison after 4 years of grueling training, his stats went up by a bit.

He only had his HP to compare, his was higher so he had to have higher vitality and endurance than this creature. Vitality gave most health points, while endurance was mostly for stamina but also rewarded some points to it.

"Roland what are you looking at, focus on your enemy!"

The voice came from the side, it was the same man that was responsible for his training. He was large and bald, scars all over his body. The Baron was busy this day but decided that it shouldn't be postponed so he was here without his parent. In his mind, this was a trivial matter and just like the other sons, he should be able to push through this little test.

'Wish that ridiculous Int stat that I have could be used for something...'

He had three stats over 20, dexterity was the only one that was helpful for this occasion but it was mostly archery focused or for light blades like a rapier. The creature in front of him gave out a high pitched screech and charged at him without waiting for him to get

comfortable. It knew that this was a life or death encounter and it would show no mercy to its opponent.

Roland was startled by the shout, but luckily his high will power let him keep a mostly clear head in this bout.

'Get a grip... you trained for this...'

The man inhabiting the youth's body would be a bit over thirty years of age at this point. Still, he was never in a death battle before, so he was quite nervous. There was no strategy to the way this monster acted, it just charged at him with its weapon in hand. It delivered an overhead chop that could be easily read, prompting Roland to dodge to the side.

This was a good chance to retaliate, he swung his short-sword at the creature but faltered at the last second. He didn't put all of his weight into it, this resulted in a shallow cut to the goblin's arm. The monster swung back randomly, managing to deliver a cut to the boy's side.

'What are you doing, go for the throat!'

Roland backed away, sweat running down his forehead. Luckily he was wearing some leather armor that managed to protect him from the brunt of the attack. The bladed weapon of the green monster was of lower quality so thank's to this he was spared from bleeding. Still, it hurt and would probably leave behind a nasty bruise.

His own attack was quite shallow as well, resulting in a similar 10 hp decrease to the goblin's health pool. The wound wasn't deep enough to cause a bleeding effect to go through and the goblin screamed out again while charging. The creature seemed to go into some kind of berserk state, its eyes went red and it started swinging its blade around like a maniac.

In the face of danger, Roland's mind went blank momentarily and he started backing away.

"What are you doing, it's only a small goblin!"

The man kept insulting him, he wanted to go over there and give him a slap. He might have been an adult on the inside, but this man thought he was a nine-year-old child. He was still shouting and edging him to face the monster head-on.

'Should have given me a shield you prick!'

The egging worked, Roland gritted his teeth and dived forward. His opponent was weaker, had no training, and was slower. Between the random slashes, Roland saw his

chance and jabbed his short-sword into the creature's shoulder, jumping back the moment it tried to hit back.

This was a massive hit as the goblin's HP dropped by 50 points and it only had half of its health left. The monster screamed out, but this time around Roland was unaffected. The monster didn't relent and continued charging like an idiot, he took his time and just kept countering finally ending it with a killing blow to the monster's neck. It dropped almost instantly, black blood gushed out of its body.

He felt a strange tingling feeling like something wanted to enter his body. The strange phenomenon stopped almost instantly as if being blocked by something. This feeling was the act of gaining experience which was blocked due to this world's restrictions.

This experience couldn't actually be used for now, as he needed an actual class. Any experience gained before the ascension ritual would be added later on but with a penalty. From the books, people speculated that this was put in place to prevent people from having kids kill monsters before the ascension.

Roland looked down, the stench this monster was giving off was making him nauseous. He managed to power through it and not vomit, his only reward for killing this monster was smack to the back of his head. His so-called teacher berated him for doing badly and not being able to just overpower a weak level 1 goblin that had no skill at fighting.

Roland was far too tired to respond to this and just nodded. His 9th birthday ended with a blast, with him killing a humanoid creature followed by some nightmares. More time passed and finally, the day was close, the day of becoming a mighty mage!