

Runesmith 45

[Chapter 45 Nosy assistant.](#)

Roland was in a bind. He was looking at a small half gnome girl shaking her body side to side. She was looking at him with those large orbs that she called eyes. The young girl had climbed through an open window and seen him runecrafting.

“Hey...how did you do that, that’s an enchanted sword for sure! You can enchant swords? Are you an enchant smith!? I knew it, you lied about your age. You have to be tier 2 for that!”

The girl had come to the conclusion that he was at least an enchant smith. She wasn’t able to distinguish between enchanting and rune smithing. This wasn’t the problem though, his secret that he somewhat wanted to keep hidden from others was now revealed.

“I’m not old you idiot and this isn’t a regular enchanted sword...”

To be honest, Roland was a bit tired of hiding here in this town. He had to wear that black robe and had to avoid people. He feared that either assassins would find him or someone related to his noble house would recognize him. If they reported it to his father he would probably get yanked back home.

Though at this point he had already used up two class slots, there wasn’t really a way for him to go back to being a soldier. At most his dear father would probably stick him in the army’s smithy to make magical swords for them. Roland wasn’t sure how forceful he would be in his methods, maybe he was overthinking it and he would be fine. Still, he was paranoid after the first assassination attempt and now there was even a second one. For now, he looked at the cute girl that was stomping her little feet on the ground.

“Who are you calling an idiot, you are the idiot... you idiot!”

The girl puffed out her cheeks and started acting out by shaking her hands around widely. Helci was behaving below her age bracket but he wasn’t sure. Not like he knew many seventeen-year-olds. The only reference to them were his old party members. He wasn’t that good with people, so this was giving him a headache.

“I’m going to have a brain aneurysm...”

“An aneurasm?... is that an enchantment?”

The pouting girl tipped her head to the side and asked, not really knowing what Roland was talking about.

The younger male placed the freshly made runic sword on his workbench. He didn’t have time to enjoy his new creation. He even wanted to try inscribing some premade steel weapons to then sell them to his boss. Now on the other hand he had this to worry about.

He looked at the not so smart looking girl and raised his eyebrow. Was he worrying too much? Would anyone even believe what she was saying? Who would she even give this information to, she was only a simple adventurer with no real pull in this city. He could also try a different approach by just asking her to stay quiet about this. He didn’t feel like this girl had an ulterior motive.

“Hey Helci, can I ask you something?”

“Um, sure...?”

She nodded.

“Do you think a tier 2 Enchant-Smith that is close to 13 years old is a common thing?”

The girl looked at Roland not really sure where he was going with this question. She was someone that had just recently started her adventuring. Her life was mostly spent at the orphanage with the church or at the inn. This didn't mean that she was ignorant of her environment, she had already gone through some experience.

“13-year-old Tier 2 enchantsmith...probably not?”

“That's right and do you know what people do to uncommon things?”

Helci rubbed her chin and then pointed at Roland.

“They want to have it? ...oh... “

She realized where Roland was going with it and quickly shouted.

“Don't worry, I won't tell anyone! Your secret is safe with me!”

Roland blinked, would it be that easy? There were ways of making people talk even if they didn't want to. He wasn't sure but Helci might have already signed a contract with his company. The gnome manager might have had foresight to sign something like a nondisclosure agreement.

Not like he could do anything about this now though, he wouldn't actually hurt the girl. She wasn't strong but didn't seem like a liar or someone that gave away other people's secrets.

“Hey! You can trust me...”

She trailed off at the end while glancing at the bronze sword that he made. Her eyes were speaking for themselves and he knew what this meant. He wanted to smack her head a bit but he knew that if you wanted something you needed to either pay or work for it.

“If you stay quiet about it, I'll enchant your sword...”

He needed to make a trade, the girl was quite honorable from what he knew. If he did something for her, she would probably feel obliged to keep quiet. Enchanted and runic weapons were really costly and he knew that Helci was quite poor. She would probably need to scrape by a lot before she could afford a weapon like that.

He wanted to offer putting runic inscriptions on her arrows at first but that wouldn't be quite possible yet. His runecrafting skill would need to be leveled up further. From what he saw the runic structures were getting smaller the further he leveled his skill up. He theorized that when he got it to about level 7, he would be able to fit lesser runes on them. Common ones were out of the question, he would probably only be able to do that after achieving a tier 2 class.

“An enchanted sword...”

The girl took a step back. She knew well that magic weapons were what a true adventurer desired. It was also a sign of wealth and prosperity. Only when you started wearing magical armor and weapons could you call yourself a true adventurer. It was a sign of prestige and a first step towards the top.

“Enchanted armor... enchanted bow...”

Roland raised an eyebrow as he saw the girl mumbling to herself. He could have sworn that she even started drooling for a while. He had underestimated how poor Helci actually was. Her life consisted of scraping by, she didn't even have a large silver coin in her pouch. She was more or less just living day to day and spending whatever she earned. Whenever she came here she would eat with him, from the rations that the company supplied to save.

“Stop, an enchanted sword is the most I can do for now. I'm still just an apprentice, I never even tried enchanting a bow either...”

He didn't even have any bow enchantments. Making a sharp bow or one that started flaming wouldn't really work. You actually needed to enchant the arrows and not the bow to empower them with magic. A good enchantment for a bow was something that made it lighter to pull, silent or hard to break. There were some powerful runes that could produce a bow that didn't need arrows and exchanged them for magical ones. This was something far too advanced for someone like him though.

He also couldn't make the superior runic weapons that had mana stones in them either. Roland theorized that he might be able to learn that skill from a skill book like the one the manager gave him. He wasn't sure if it was a tier 2 or tier 3 skill though, probably at most he could get a basic version of it. This would probably lengthen the crafting process extensively.

The girl looked a bit saddened by the fact that she wouldn't be getting an enchanted bow. Still, she recovered quickly while pulling out her shortsword. She was of a smaller stature compared to a human so this was almost a long sword to her.

Roland looked at the sword to identify it. Considering he was a blacksmith now, he was able to identify basic weapons made from regular metals.

He had a whole list of various stats now, he couldn't see some of the subcategories quite yet though. For instance, the damage type that showed up. If he leveled up his skills he would be able to see a letter next to it, ranging from F to S. The information varied, the sharpness was indicated by a percentage but other statics could be counted by a letter or some kind of word instead. It was quite confusing and there was no uniform grading system there.

Roland looked over the short sword, it was slightly banged up. If the weapon's sharpness went below 40% the weapon would get a 'dull' debuff. The damage it could output would also go down. At 0% it would lose its slashing damage and turn to blunt damage that was lower.

Helci looked at the taller youth that was eyeing her shortsword strangely. He waved it around and even poked it with his finger a bit. His eyebrows went from squinting to frowning and he even started to scoff while examining the short sword.

“I-is it that bad?”

The girl was slightly disheartened that the weapon she had spent a large chunk of her coins on was getting scrutinized. This and her bow was the only thing she could afford, she was already saving a bit on the arrows as Roland was making them almost for free. She only needed to supply the raw materials like the iron or steel stocks and the premade arrow quills.

“Bad? No, it’s fine, but it needs some sharpening... what kind of enchantment would you like to put on it. Mind you, I can only put lesser ones on this and it will probably take over a week or two to make. How about a sharpness one? Those are quite popular”

Roland replied hoping that she would go for the easy sharpness rune. He wasn’t quite sure what the adventurers liked to have on their enchanted swords. The sharpness enchantment when activated didn’t actually change the sword’s structure.

Instead, it surrounded the blade part with a thin layer of mana that smoothed things out and made it sharper. After mana stopped being injected the blade went back to being a regular piece of metal. This type of enchantment drained mana slowly by the second. It was similar to the scorching rune and differed from the spell runes that took a chunk of a user’s mana when activated.

“What kind of enchantment? I can choose?”

The girl’s big eyes sparkled and she started to bounce about the room. This also made Roland’s eyes momentarily wander down to a certain bouncy body part. He quickly shook his head, the hormones in this body were starting to make things difficult for the old man on the inside.

After Helci posed the question he felt like he had made a big mistake. He probably should have taken the blade and inscribed the rune of his choosing. Now he left the choice up to a girl that was in a perpetual state of poverty. Would she go for the cheapest option when someone offered something for free?

“Enchantment... it must be one of those sword attacks! The sharpness enchantment isn’t even that good!”

She crossed her hands over her chest and started nodding. Apparently, she wanted something else, an attack-type enchantment.

Just like mages had magic spells like the fire arrow spell that he frequently used. There were special skills and magical attacks that magical warriors utilized. These magical skills like the scorching ability were mostly something from the mana warrior’s repertoire. It was also a tier 1 class, similar to the mana scribe class.

The scorching enchantment was a lesser version of the flame sword enchantment that was accessible for a tier 2 Flame Warrior. Similar to the tier 2 elemental mage variants the magical warriors specialized in their own set of elements.

Scorching only made the blade heat up and produce a flame. It wasn’t much better than having a torch, the tier 2 version actually heated it up to the point of letting the user cut and scorch monster flesh. Then a tier 3 version that was called the Blazing Sword enchantment would even allow the user to melt through other metals.

When it came to tier 1 mana warrior skills that could be put on swords there were two main ones. The mana slash and the mana thrust. The first one produced a sharp condensed blade of blue mana that could be used as a ranged attack. The other produced a similar effect just with the thrusting motion and would punch a hole in the enemy from further away.

“I want a mana slash enchantment...but maybe the thrust is better...”

The girl did actually want one of those. This meant that he would need to make a visit to one of the weapon shops and get it. He could also just put a mana arrow spell on it instead. But such spells didn't really work well with warriors specialized movements. They worked best with things like the wands he made. Aiming magic with heavy weapons was less than optimal.

The mana slash attack could be easily timed and activated during a fight. This made it slightly similar to the impact rune but it delivered magic damage which sometimes was a must to beat some opponents.

The impact rune only increased the weight of your weapon but didn't add any magical properties. There were some monsters out there that were immune to physical attacks. Thus this type of enchantment was popular with the warriors that couldn't become a magic swordsman.

These mana attacks also used up less MP than magic spells used by mages. This was mostly due to having a lower range of attack. The mana slash would travel 10 meters at most and the thrust went a little further.

“I have my arrows and bow, so the close-ranged mana slash will probably be better.”

Helci thought out loud while rubbing her chin. She was looking at her short sword that she retrieved from Roland. She performed some slashes and thrusts before coming to a decision. The mana slash would be the one that she would get.

“Mana slash? I don't really know that one...”

The moment Roland said that Helci's head dropped a bit along with her shoulders.

“But... I can learn to make it, you'll just have to wait a bit...”

She quickly raised her head up after hearing his words, her eyes glittered and she jumped forward. Roland was surprised, the girl was really quick as she gave him a big hug. He wasn't really used to shows of affection so both his hands were hovering in the air as he wasn't sure what to do with them.

“You're the best Roland, I'll be sure to cook you up something great!”

Roland coughed a bit into his hand after the two separated. Various thoughts were going through his head, mostly ones that were affected by his teenage hormones. The girl looked up to the youth and noticed him acting strange, this brought a little smile on her face.

“So, you can make that kind of face...”

She giggled to herself while Roland turned around. He wasn't sure what kind of face he was making but he felt defeated after getting teased by a kid.

“I don't know what you are talking about, shouldn't you be working?”

Helci gave Roland a salute before skipping to the side. He actually had a stove where the girl could cook in the warehouse portion. It was far enough from the smelter and the anvil so that no hot metal or iron shavings got into the food.

Roland gave out a sigh before grabbing a sword from the side. It was a premade product that he got from his company. With Helci already knowing his true skills he could just work normally. This might have actually been a good thing, now he didn't need to hide his class from his assistant.

The sword he would be crafting a rune on was a regular steel longsword. He would be adding a basic sharpness rune on it. It would probably take him a while to do this after which he could go to one of the stores to 'borrow' a mana slash schematic. He had a lot of work on his hands and now even an eager half-gnome that would probably bug him for the item he promised her.

[Chapter 46 Trouble brewing.](#)

A young man about the age of 20 was walking through the forest. He was holding onto a piece of parchment that had a drawing on it. He had been going through the instructions on this piece of paper towards a supposed meet up point.

"Is that the tree..."

There was a large dead tree in the middle of nowhere. The grass around here was thin and lacked color. The man walked up to it and pulled out a white envelope. The envelope was sealed by a red seal that had a certain insignia on it. The crest on it had a knight on a horse that was standing up on it and it was in the shape of a shield.

The man moved forward and looked at the ugly looking tree. He started feeling out the wide trunk with his fingers and finally found what he was looking for.

"Here it is..."

He injected mana while pushing his fingers into a certain spot. The dark trunk lit up and he could see some intricate runic symbols showing. The man's hands started shaking slightly as he had a bad premonition. He looked to the piece of paper and moistened up his lips before speaking out...

"Master of the abyss, I abandon myself wholly to thy power."

"You are the Darkness behind and beneath the shadows."

"You are the absence of air that awaits at the bottom of every breath..."

The man continued to read the lengthy chant. The more words he said the more the dead tree reacted to his presence and when he finished it started humming. He took a step back, afraid that he had messed up. Just as he was about to retreat back out of fright the tree's wide trunk started opening. A previously unseen hole revealed itself as the branches and bark shifted.

The man looked at the head-sized hole and then quickly threw the letter in. The piece of paper that he was previously reading caught on fire the moment he did. He tossed it to the side while it burned in a dark flame, nothing was left of the parchment but ashes. The hole that he threw the parchment in sealed itself up almost instantly after the message was delivered.

The man quickly turned away and started running. He was given a set of instructions to deliver this letter. He had no idea what was in it or who the people behind this strange tree were. From the sound of it, they were worshipers of some kind of evil god, which one he had no idea as there were more than one.

He wouldn't remain here for the worshipers of this god to return. He had gotten the letter from a noble's knight. He knew to what house he belonged to, if the noble behind this knight was an evil god worshiper it would be better to leave this area. Nothing ever good came from involving yourself with people like that. There were even fallen cities that were run over by demons.

People would make contracts with these demonic beings to gain power. People could achieve special prestige classes as a boon. These classes mostly demanded bloody sacrifices and some people possessing them would be turned into monsters in human form. The power they possessed was very real which in term corrupted them to turn to that side.

The man sped up, his feet moved silently through the night. The forest was quiet and he couldn't even hear any animals or monsters around him. There was something odd about this. He was someone experienced, when he was going this way he could clearly feel hidden beings but now there was nothing. It was as if they vanished into thin air.

He continued running but there was a problem. The path that he had marked for his return was gone. He made sure to nick the trees here and there so that he wouldn't be lost. He stopped and looked around, the howling winds pushed the tree branches around that looked like sharp claws in the moonlight.

The man began sweating as he felt that he was in danger. This wasn't right he thought and bolted forward. He needed to get out of here as fast as he could. He ran and ran and his stamina counter continued to drop fast. He was someone at the tier 2 class and had stamina to spare.

"What the..."

He pushed through some bushes and saw something odd. The same tree that he had placed the letter in was there out in the clearing. Was he running around in circles this whole time? Something was off, he knew that he didn't have such a bad sense of direction.

He tried finding the place that he came through the first time and started running again. There were still no signs of his old path as before.

"N...no...how is this possible?"

After another hour of running he ended up at the large dead tree once again, It was as if it was mocking him. He looked up into the night sky and noticed another thing. The moons didn't seem to be changing. He had already spent two hours in this forest but the night wasn't passing. It should be four in the morning now, but it looked like time had frozen.

His eyes went bloodshot as the nightmare continued. He continuously ran through the forest trying to find his way home. One day, two days, and then a whole week had passed but he still ended up by the tree.

He started cutting the tree in a fit of rage but whenever he left and came back it was as if nothing happened. No matter how much damage he delivered to the tree, when he came back it was as if he was never there, to begin with.

When he was his second week into this nightmare something suddenly happened. He looked down at his chest. He moved his trembling hand to the right side and felt horrible pain. It was as if someone was stabbing something sharp right through his heart.

“Aww, did you have to do that? He didn’t even fully fall to the curse...”

The man blinked and the scenery changed slightly. He was still next to the dead tree but he wasn’t alone. This time around he noticed two people standing over him while he was down on the ground. One of the people was pushing a glowing red dagger through his chest where his heart was. He couldn’t really make out their facial features as his life soon faded and he dropped dead.

“We don’t have time for this.”

The man that was holding the knife scoffed at the person next to him. From their figures, you could make out that the one with the dagger was a man and the other person was a woman.

The dagger that was plunged into the dead man’s chest started glowing even more as it got pulled out. The veins in his body started glowing bright orange and then turned to red. The deep wound where the heart was started pulsating in the same color and glowing brightly.

“Oooh, I love this part!”

The woman laughed while looking at the twitching body. The skin sizzled and started fading away and soon the whole body burned away into ashes. Nothing besides the man’s clothes and a certain item was left behind. The man moved his hand into the spot where the dead man’s heart was and he pulled out a blood-colored crystal.

“So shiny, but it’s only a tier 2 not really worth using~”

“Stop fooling around and get the letter, we had spent too much time here already”

The man scoffed while removing the man’s gear from the ground. He was sure to wipe away all the traces while the woman moved over to the tree. She placed her hand on the trunk but didn’t recite the chant. The tree opened up in a similar fashion to reveal the letter on the inside.

“Got it~”

She waved at her partner that was already moving away from the scene of the crime. Soon both of them vanished into the night. What was left of the man were only his ashes that would soon become fertilizer for the grass and plants.

Life continued and at the dawn of the next day, Rolan was looking over his first creation.

Sharp Runic Steel Longsword [Intermediate, High]

He had inscribed the sharpness rune on the first longsword that he received. He didn't put his red comet calling card on this item. It didn't feel right unless he created everything himself. He also didn't want his mark being associated with anything else than high and highest graded items.

The materials for the runic scrolls didn't matter that much as they were one use only. But when it came to swords he didn't want them to be anything less than high. He could very well sell this item without his calling card so it didn't matter that much.

He took the sword for a test run by activating the rune. The sword started to faint glow in blue light and the inscribed rune started glowing. He examined it closely and could feel his MP slowly going down while the magic effect was active.

He placed the sword that he upgraded into a magical one into a nice box and then tied it together with some string. He would earn some nice cash by selling this thing and he didn't actually lose any money while making it. The company provided the blade and they also provided the crafting hammer. The only thing he needed to put into this was his time and mana.

"Helci, could you take this and carry it back to Exeor's Magic Emporium?"

The girl peeked her head into the workshop and grabbed the box with the sword inside. She looked over it for a moment before placing it into her own spatial bag.

"So, will you be making my sword now?"

She leaned over closer to Roland and gave his side a poke with her finger. His body reacted in an odd fashion as he twitched uncontrollably. It had taken him five days to finish this product. Making runic inscriptions on steel weapons was a lot harder than on bronze.

This also meant that his assistant bothered him every day for the whole week. She was clearly the impatient type but a promise was a promise.

"Yeah yeah. I'll be making yours next, I just need to go to the store to go get something."

The girl smiled brightly after hearing that and finally left while carrying his first store worthy weapon.

Roland gave out a sigh and put on his robe, the one he used to hide his appearance. He didn't have time to scout out the next schematic. This time around he would have to remember a more difficult one. It was for the 'mana slash' rune that allowed other people to use a mana warrior's skill.

'Wish I had time to go make that bike..'

He thought to himself while going towards his next destination. He was worried about standing out so he decided to go to a different weapon shop this time around. This one was quite a distance away from his workshop though so it took him a while to walk there.

On the inside it had a similar layout to the other shop he was in before. The difference was that instead of the better items being upstairs they were down in the lower levels instead. He walked around it and was lucky enough to discover a blade with the enchantment he was looking for.

There were some guards and clerks loitering around as always. The glass case this weapon was placed in was a bit more problematic. In the other store, the case was in a more secluded spot. This one was hanged out for everyone to see along with some other weapons.

He couldn't just stand there for ten minutes with his face pressed against the glass case. There were too many people around. He moved forward, the furthest away that he could while being able to activate his debugging skill. Inconspicuous or not, he needed to get this crafting schematic somehow.

He walked and glanced but there were other people there and they continued to walk around. Sometimes they blocked the view, sometimes a worker came over and broke his concentration. He was also standing too far away and couldn't see well. After fifteen minutes of bumbling about, he backed away and went outside the store.

'This isn't working, maybe I'll make some notes on the way and then try recreating it back at my workshop?'

He thought to himself while taking out some rough paper. He started thinking back to the rune layout and started scribbling down what he remembered. He looked at the finished product and furrowed his brows but before he could scoff even more he felt a tapping on his shoulder.

"What are you doing?"

"Who, what?"

He turned around and saw a familiar-looking girl, it was his assistant Helci.

"What are you doing here?... did you follow me?"

"Of course! You said you were going to enchant my sword and get some materials! I'm here to help!"

She smiled. She was a scout and a tracker so following Roland's trail with one of her skills was quite easy. While using such a skill she had a nice trail of his footprints to follow that glowed.

"You really want to get that enchantment, don't you..."

She just nodded while looking at him. Roland just wanted to facepalm, he didn't even get the rune schematics and now she was even here. There were just too many people inside looking around, maybe he needed to find another store or give up. He then looked to Helci who was just humming to herself some kind of tune. He then got a not so good idea.

"Hey, Helci..."

He walked up to the girl and then started whispering his plan into her ear. The girl just looked at him and nodded, not really sure where he was going with it.

Back inside the store, Roland walked back to where the sword was hanging and went back to work. This time around he got a lot closer and stopped moving.

There were still other people here but the moment someone else moved to the larger display case they were blocked by a cute-looking half gnome girl.

"Hey, have you heard about our lady and savior Goddess Solaria?"

The person looked at the girl while flinching and instantly backed away. The zealots around the city were well known so most people didn't like talking to them.

This was more or less the plan that Roland hastily came up with. While he was trying to remember the schematic Helci would try to somehow get the people away. She just needed to stall them for ten minutes or get their attention away from him. The Solaria bit was just one of the easiest ways of keeping people away from you. It would also get you removed from the store sooner or later as store owners didn't allow such things inside.

The girl switched it up but actually shoulder tackling one person that started getting too close to where Roland was. She also started singing and dancing which finally brought the store clerk over to check the situation.

She was finally thrown out of the store but it was enough time for Roland to go through the whole runic diagram in his head. With the previously drawn notes, he was sure that he would be able to draw a working schematic.

Helci was really a good worker when her enchanted sword was on the line. Roland just needed to tell her a half-truth. He explained that he needed to examine the sword from the store that had her enchantment on it for some reference. The people were getting in his way and he couldn't concentrate. She was very eager to help after the explanation.

The two were now back at the workshop. Helci handed Roland a bag of coins that was filled with gold and silver. This was part of his earnings from the past month and it looked like the sword that he just made was also counted in.

"Okay Helci, I need to concentrate now so you are free to go, I should have your sword ready within a week. You can take one of those in the meantime... though they aren't really that good..."

In the corner of the workshop were some steel swords that were meant for runic enchanting. He would lend her one of them but she would need to return it. He was able to repair swords like that but not that confident in making one at the same intermediate rank.

Roland's life as a Runic Blacksmith continued and he was slowly building up his monetary empire. He spent most of his time focusing on enhancing the premade swords that his company was giving him and training his runecraft. He didn't even need to bother with the scribing skill that wasn't even leveling up. His boss even allowed him to make the switch as the swords would bring in more money.

So the days continued, soon they turned into weeks and then into months. His life slowly continued without much happening until about the one and a half year mark which brought some changes.