

Runesmith 47

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A tall young man of about 183 cm of height was standing next to a large anvil. He was wearing a cotton shirt and had a large thick blacksmith's apron over it. The shirt was quite loose which allowed for more airflow and better ventilation. Still, there was some sweat forming on his brow.

His build wasn't very bulky but you could see quite a lot of tone on his arms and chest. It looked like the youth's body didn't have a chance to build enough muscle to go with his growth spurt.

The youth was standing in a blacksmiths workshop and had a flat piece of steel in his hand. It was already heated up and red after he took it out of his forge. This was obviously the material he was working on, he placed it on the anvil and started delivering hard hammer blows to it.

The piece of steel started to slowly take shape. The blows were delivered consistently over the whole length at high precision. His hand didn't shake and he never missed the correct spot. From time to time you would see his hands stopping and an ethereal glow filling his eyes. Which after the hammering process continued.

The previously angular piece of metal started getting stretched out. There was a lot of back and forth in this forging process. The piece of metal needed to be reheated multiple times and hammered into the correct blade shape. Soon it was noticeable that the young smith was making a long bladed weapon.

There was nothing more to it, just consistent hammer strikes were enough to get the piece of metal into a sword shape. One end was pointed while the other one was left smaller for the handle and the crossguard. This end was called the tang and he needed to make it thinner at the end to fit it through the pommel.

Before the crossguard and pommel would be made, the rough-looking sword needed a lot of grinding. The whole piece of metal needed to be filed down and sharpened to the utmost perfection before the next process.

There were no power tools in this world but the youth had something similar. It allowed him to make the process of polishing and grinding faster but at a small cost. After that task was finished the hammering of a piece of steel that would be the crossguard started.

The shape that was hammered looked cruciform at a slight bent that would be going outwards from the sword grip. The young blacksmith punched a hole through the middle that would be used to attach the crossguard to the blade. He made sure to first test if it fit before continuing with the hammering so that it would take the desired shape.

After the blade and the crossguard were ready only the pommel remained. It would be placed below the grip and would have a circular shape. After this was done the process of normalizing the steel remained. Forging created stresses and normalizing relieved that stresses.

After completing that process he only needed to attach all the parts and polish everything to perfection.

Without drills in this world, the swords were held in place by a certain technique that was called peening. This was done by hammering the steel part that was poking out through the hollow pommel. Thanks to this the sword hilt wouldn't slip anymore and everything would be nice and tight.

If he managed to create a drill, he could just attach the round sword pommel by just screwing it into place.

After some time the youth was left with a working product. He looked at it while nodding but this wasn't over yet. He grabbed another hammer from the side, this one looked different from the rest and it had a strange runic pattern on the face side.

The process of runecrafting had started. The youth hammered away, this time with much less force. The strikes were slow and precise and each time one landed a part of a rune was formed. This process took almost as long as the whole forging did. The youth had a couple of accessories helping him out with managing his mana so it sped things up a bit.

Still, it took him a week to get this sword done. This was already a big improvement considering that he was creating a special kind of rune.

An older looking Roland glanced at the stats of his creation. He was slightly disheartened that he only managed to make an intermediate ranked steel sword. Though his runecrafting had taken off and he was now able to produce the highest tier runes of the lesser rank.

This was the culmination of the last one and a half years of work. A weapon with a double rune inscription. He had managed to take the two popular runes of mana slash and mana thrust and combine it into an interchangeable spell structure.

The trick to using this kind of weapon was with the user's mana control. It took some time to learn but with time a person would be able to interchange between the two skills. This wasn't a new skill but depended on the rune schematic. The biggest problem was in planning and producing a working dual rune that could house two spells at once.

There were a couple of techniques that a runesmith could work with here. The one he used required the runes to be similar and share most of their components. Both Mana Slash and Mana Thrust were similar in their runic spell structure. He just needed to combine them and connect them in the right place so that they could be activated separately.

The activation nodes for each one were in a slightly different place. The user would need to remember where exactly and be able to correctly inject their mana there. This was the biggest weakness of this design as it was troublesome for people that didn't possess any mana related skills. They would find it hard to control such items which lowered the market value a bit.

Another way to do it would be to have separate moving parts, for instance, a sort of movable ring. The user could then turn it around and connect the rune they wanted to use. With such a design there was no need for mana control.

He placed the finished sword to the side and examined his skills and stats, he had made some progress but he wasn't quite there yet.

Name :

Roland Arden L 69

Classes:

T1 Mage L25 [Secondary]

T1 Runic Mana Scribe L 25 [X]

T1 Runic Blacksmith L 19 [Main]

HP

700/700

MP

338/2538

SP

326/1003

Strength

53

Agility

38

Dexterity

80

Vitality

52

Endurance

60

Intelligence

114

Willpower

100

Charisma

16

Luck

8

His physical stats besides agility had increased by quite a bit. This class was one of the better ones if it came to that. His previous runic scribe class didn't really give him anything besides intelligence, dexterity, and willpower.

The runic blacksmith class was endurance and strength reliant so he saw a big increase in those two skills as well as in his health. It was also a runic variant so it increased his willpower and intelligence by a large margin. Though it was heavier on the willpower, probably due to the rune smithing skill that required a lot of concentration.

With his increased stats he could actually produce this type of combination rune in less than a week. Previously he had a hard time with easier runes on bronze materials. He had indeed made a lot of progress this past year.

He was now an actual blacksmith. His basic smithing skills were all close to maxing out. Luckily he had the schematic trick so his level could keep up with his skills.

Still, he was slowly reaching an impasse. His leveling was now at an all-time low and he was already running low on schematics. Without them, he would probably need another two years of crafting to max his level out.

'Maybe I should give the adventuring gig a try again...'

He thought to himself while giving out a sigh. This brought back a memory of a certain person that wasn't here anymore.

"Are you done? Can I make my delivery?"

A high pitched voice called out to Roland. It came from outside the workshop that was closed. He didn't want people walking in on him when he was busy with his work.

"Yeah, give me a moment"

The moment he was done with this sword he had massaged the person responsible for transport. He did this thanks to a small magical device that worked similar to a pager.

It looked like a little bell but when rung another exact copy of this bell would ring. Thus a person on the other end would then know that it was time to pick up the goods.

He wasn't giving away the sword that he just made. He was still just runecrafting on the premade weapons that the company was sending him. The better-made items that he was still testing were for himself.

Roland grabbed a prepared parcel from the side. He then slid it through a smaller opening in his entrance door. The person on the other side was an alchemy apprentice. The same person that picked Roland up from prison over a year ago.

He just grabbed the package with a different sword that Roland had made and walked away. Roland and this youth didn't really talk that much with each other. The halfling youth was still mad that he needed to be an errand boy. The person that used to do this had quit a couple of months ago.

Roland closed the latch and walked back to his room. It was cluttered with his notes and rune schematics. Since his old assistant decided to finally leave for a city with a dungeon in it.

Yes, Helci had left Edelgard about two months ago and he was still getting used to living in more silence again. She did leave him a gift before going away but something like that wouldn't be mentioned to anyone else.

It was quite the experience but waking up to a farewell note ruined the ending. Not like he blamed her for anything. Both of them had clearly different life goals.

He wanted to stay in one place and practice his crafting. In the near future, he wanted to open his own shop and live a quiet life. Helci on the other hand wanted to adventure.

She only stayed in the city due to a lack of funds and equipment. When the time was right she began her journey towards a place that had a Dungeon near it. This was the best option for an aspiring adventurer. There wasn't much of that in this city.

"Dungeons and adventuring, huh?"

He said while grabbing one of the more clean looking mugs. After each successful craft, he liked to drink some hot black tea. It tasted similar to earl gray tea from his old world and went down well with some honey.

He looked at some old banged up iron swords that were tossed in the corner. While the girl was still here he did act as a sparring partner. His battle skills did go up a bit from that. Even though he didn't see adventuring as anything else than a means to an end. He knew that gaining levels and getting stronger would help him out in this life.

He didn't feel like venturing deeper into the monster-infested forest would be a good idea though. He always kept to the edges of it, the hobgoblin he met was already a big surprise.

There were tier 2 and probably some tier 3 monsters in there. Luckily they didn't venture out of the forest. The creatures were wary of the humans living behind the large stone walls. They also had no leader to gather them up against a common enemy.

Unless the beasts caused trouble outside the forest areas the city lord or the guild wouldn't get involved. Sometimes large scale eradication missions took place to thin the population. It wasn't quite time for that just yet.

After finishing up the tea he walked over to a large metallic box. It had a handle and after opening it up a small wave of chilled air hit his face.

This was his version of a refrigerator that he came up with. It was more or less a big black box made of iron with a latch on it. Inside a person could see some runic inscriptions of similar-looking runes.

These were runes that had the job of chilling the inside of this large box. The runes didn't use up much mana as they didn't even reach freezing temperatures. Compared to something like a frozen arrow spell they didn't really need much mana to run.

Regretfully Roland wasn't able to integrate mana stones into the construction quite yet. Instead, he needed to periodically charge the magic refrigerator with his own mana. It was sealed tightly so as long as the chilly air didn't escape he didn't need to recharge it that much.

This wasn't the only improvement to his shop. He had thought about improving some of his tools with a more modern outlook. What did the modern smiths from his old world have that these didn't? It was mainly power tools, things like drills that were used instead of punches for holes.

He had managed to emulate one of those tools, mainly an automatic grinder. He would have liked to make a belt grinder but he went with an easier option. He just modified the foot-powered grindstone to be powered with runes. The speed it could reach with the added rune was far greater than before and sped up the process of grinding exponentially.

The downside was the use of mana but luckily it didn't burn that much of it down when activated. The rune wasn't very intricate and didn't require that much force as it just needed to spin the wheel around. He also hoped to improve on the design in the future when he got the mana stone problem sorted out.

He had gotten more info about the later Runesmith skills and he had also bought a skill book that cost him almost half a year's worth of work. The one he bought had the name 'Basic Rune Compression'. Just as its name stated it was a skill that allowed a user to condense their runes into smaller ones without losing any power.

Besides this purchased skill he also gained some with his own class naturally. One of them he even used during the crafting of his sword and it was called 'Runic Blacksmith's Eyes'. It allowed him to see cracks and fissures in the items that he crafted in real-time. With it, he had an idea where to deliver his next hammer strike to fix a broken structure during the creation procedure.

It was also an enhanced version of a similar skill that was called 'Blacksmith's Eyes' and helped him guide his runic inscription during the runecrafting process. Only when he got that skill was he able to break through from 'high' into the 'highest' grade.

Another skill was called 'Blacksmith's Heat Sense' and it was used to help a smith with measuring the right heat. Thanks to this he always knew when the metal was ready for normalizing or for hammering.

These were all nice and helpful skills but the one he really wanted to find was related to mana stones. He had asked the gnome manager about it but apparently, the runesmiths kept that one a secret. There were very few skill books out there with it and it cost a lot more than what he was making. The only way the gnome would sponsor that skill for him was through a contract extension.

There was also the way of earning skills yourself or unlocking it with your class. He could very well receive it the moment he reached the tier 2 crafting class of his choice or down the line. There was no reason to put himself in debt quite yet, he was still young and could already produce weapons above most regular runesmiths. All thanks to those schematics and his debugging skill that showed him the way.

The only real problem at this point was producing common grade equipment. Even with his improved level and skills, it wasn't that easy. There was also the problem with the materials. Regular steel weapons degraded really fast with any runes above the lesser grade.

The natural step up would be deep iron and deep steel that was an alloy from it. What came with better material were higher costs and increased difficulty in runecrafting.

He glanced at his skills once more before thinking about the future.

Debugger L 6, Circuitry L 7, Tinkerer L 8, Identify L 8, Basic Mana Shaping L 9, Basic Mana Regulation L 9, Mana Sense L 9, Basic Rune Mastery L 9, Basic Rune Scribing L 9, Basic Smithing Mastery L 8, Basic Runecraft L 7, Runic Blacksmith's Eyes L 5, Blacksmith's Heat Sense L 6, Basic Rune Compression L 3, Ethereal Pathways L 6

He received the heat sense skill at level 7 and the blacksmith's eyes skill at level 13. He had been a blacksmith for about two years now. His progress was slightly faster than of other smiths but not by that much. The basic skills leveled up fairly quickly. He mostly suffered by having too many skills to focus on. Runecrafting did keep him away from regular smithing. He felt that in a year or two he should have all these skills maxed and ready for the tier 2 class change.

The more interesting things were his Debugger, Circuitry, and Tinkerer skills that he had from day one. They had also leveled up, the tinkerer one the most as he was probably gaining experience to it thanks to smithing. The other two probably ranked up thanks to runecrafting or runescribing. It took quite a long time to level them up though, almost a whole 4 years to be exact. He figured that the runes he was working on might have been too low leveled for these skills to gain much experience.

"Maybe if I focus on runic compression I'll be able to squeeze some common runes on the swords so that they don't melt after five uses..."

He rubbed his chin before grabbing his coat. He didn't find much leftover food in his runic refrigerator so he had to go do some shopping. No more assistant meant that he was back to dining at the pubs and inns. He left his workshop with a layer of clothes, it was winter this season and it was quite chilly outside. The small feet imprints of the halfling youth were barely visible as it had started to snow.

'Maybe when my contract runs out I could go to a city with less snow and rain...'

He thought to himself while walking, the frosty air making him push a shawl up towards his mouth as he hid his face. The city was silent, nothing had occurred for the past year and a half. Roland was slowly getting used to this kind of life but if it would continue as such no one knew.

[Chapter 48 Thinking back and new discoveries.](#)

The sound of distant barking broke the silence of the night. It was faintly noticeable between the howling wind that rattled the uneven windows in Roland's room. The light from his candle flickered as it danced around.

The young man was lying down on his bed. Roland was holding both his hands behind his head and looking at the ceiling. He was spacing out while thinking about the future. He had already spent almost ten years in this foreign world and he still felt like he didn't belong here.

He thought back to the day that he had arrived. He was confused and scared, the people in his so-called new home were cold and distant. The original Roland was a five-year-old child and didn't know much about the world. His old memories had already faded into obscurity and he wasn't sure why his siblings were so distant. The only reason he could find was his mother that was still a mystery to this day.

There were no photos or paintings of her left in the mansion. The child that was once Roland couldn't recall her face either. Apparently, she had died giving birth to him but if that was the truth or not was unknown. His status was showing that he was 100% human so he didn't think she would turn out to be a demon lord like in some fantasy tales that he read in his free time.

Then there were his three brothers. He didn't really interact with the other two that were of noble birth and the youngest hated his guts. The reason was also a mystery but probably it was due to this whole noble lineage nonsense. That brother's mother was also a commoner, a daughter of a merchant to be precise.

He remembered a few instances where that brother of his lashed out at him. Luckily, most of the time there were people around and no fights broke out. It would be really unfortunate if he got beat up by a child only a few years older than his new body. Roland also kept to himself and avoided confrontations from happening by hiding in some secluded spots to train his skills.

He wasn't sure what his brothers were up to now. Did they finish the knight academy and were now back at the Arden Estate? Were his sisters getting married off to some nobles to gain more prestige and power? Maybe they were lucky enough to nab themselves someone that they actually liked.

Normally a youth that had a warrior class and was from a noble line would go to the knight academy to train. Just as the name implied it was a school for young nobles. The curriculum of such an academy varied. It wasn't just physical and combat training, a knight had to know how to read and present themselves.

They would study things like etiquette, languages from other countries, history, and even accounting. A lot of went into a knight and they had to train in particular skills to unlock the more noble versions of their classes.

If you wanted to achieve a knight class first you needed a tier 1 Squire class. Depending on the choices of other tier 1 classes you could rank up to a tier 2 knight eventually.

For instance, if you were lucky enough to have a mana warrior class and a Squire class, you could then quickly switch to a tier 2 Mana Knight. Then depending on your elemental affinity, you could specialize into something like a Flame Knight. There were various combinations to this class as well as the others.

His mind drifted away from his family and he recalled another person that was at him during that five-year stop. It was his maid Martha that was more or less his mother figure. He had certain emotions towards that woman but he mostly considered that to be due to the leftover feelings from his host's body.

She was someone who at least cared but if she would be willing to drop her cushy job back at the Arden estate and come here to help him out? He was living in a warehouse that would probably be quite chilly if he wasn't a blacksmith who used a lot of hot metal.

There was also the problem of contacting her. Sending her a letter was one option but it could very well be intercepted by someone from the noble house. He didn't know who hired the first assassin that went after him. There was nothing stopping that person from hiring more if they knew where he lived.

Roland shook his head as he tried not to think about his old family anymore. That was something that he had left behind a long time ago. He was now more or less self-sufficient and part of the working class. His runic swords were being sold to the adventurers already and he was earning a hefty sum for someone his age.

This was still not nearly enough to start his own business though. He would probably have to go to a different town where he could set up a shop. A town where the prices for real estate were a lot lower than here. The taxes also depended on the nobles that ruled the lands. He looked over some potential new places but he was still on the fence.

It would probably be a lot easier to live his life here. He would probably get a new workshop after ranking up to tier 2. Maybe even some tier 1 blacksmiths as helpers and they would be all hired through the company he was working for. Still, he would be only part of a bigger machine, just a larger cog in it but still not his own man. Even though it was slightly troublesome, he still had dreams of starting his own workshop.

He rolled to one side of his bed and then to the other before finally getting up. For some reason, he couldn't sleep. He activated the life detection magical device that he had made and couldn't see any enemies nearby.

His life had gotten quite mundane after the last incident, he spent most of it working at his workshop. There were no more assassination attempts on his life for quite some time now. The gnome was holding up his part of the contract and he was well protected.

Roland grabbed a stack of papers from the side and started looking through them. He was doing his own research in hopes of discovering a new skill.

The people in this world were very reliant on their skills. It was thus very hard to come by any type of research materials that weren't just skill books. Those just gave a person the knowledge instantly without really giving them time to contemplate over it.

It was as if a person was learning to ride a horse without having mastered walking. Riding a horse was the superior type of travel but if you got off your horse you couldn't go anywhere. Thus it was hard for a person to research other similar skills as they lacked the basic knowledge to do so.

This was why Roland was now re-educating himself. He was far too reliant on his debugging skill for his runes. Without it, he would probably not be able to improve a lesser rune by himself. At least not before he started his own research. Now he was able to see some of the patterns and even understand them on a surface level.

There was a certain crafting technique he wanted to learn, the one that would boost his items to another level. It was the one that melded mana stones into the runic structure and powered them.

There were two main ways that this technique worked. One was by somehow combining the sizzling hot metal with the mana stone during the smelting process. The runesmith would create a special mana alloy that would retain more ambient mana in itself. These special alloys would then allow a runesmith to make weapons with lower requirements for mana.

This was the harder way of doing this and the prices were also higher. Of course, the way of doing this was hidden away by the runesmiths. They would also charge you an arm and a leg for it as they weren't willing to aid their competition.

This was considered to be the superior technique compared to the other one. There were even superior versions of it that worked on materials other than metal. But they apparently required special smelters, techniques, and more skills that kept everything together.

The second option was a lot simpler. First, you just needed to get your hands on a raw mana stone from a monster. The better the quality the lower the mana usage would become. If you managed to get a strong enough mana stone you could even make a weapon that didn't need any outside mana to run.

After acquiring this resource a runesmith would take an item, for instance, a sword. He would then have to craft a socket for it, mostly he would place it in the hilt or just above the crossguard. The stone would be then inserted into the special socket. The mana stone would then turn into a battery for that item. The socket being nothing more than a conduit for the mana stone.

What he really needed to find here was the correct runic structure for this socket. Fashioning an opening to fit a round object as a mana stone wasn't hard. He just needed to connect it with the main runic pathways and make a complete circuit. He already tried the direct approach but it didn't work, so he decided to evaluate his knowledge and go back to the basics.

'It Would be easier to get my hands on one of those runic weapons with these sockets but then this research would lose its meaning...'

He had contemplated buying one of those items himself, he had earned some gold coins since getting here and could afford a common item. But then he felt like he would again rely on his debugging skill too much. Then he would probably run into another wall down the line, that one probably far greater than this one.

So there he was looking back through some chicken scratch that he called notes. The candles that he was using were of the magical kind so they would burn for a lot longer. This didn't increase the quality of light though as his eyes were getting tired.

In a slight fit, he finally tossed a bunch of notes up into the air and leaned back in his chair. The stack of papers flew everywhere and started slowly descending after hitting the ceiling. He closed his eyes and gave out an audible sigh before feeling something land on his face. It was one of the pages that he tossed up, the moment he opened his eyes it was before him.

He removed it from his face and furrowed his brows. It was one of the runic components that he had drawn but it was upside down. He looked at it for a second before realizing something.

'What if I've been looking at this issue in the wrong way, what if the mana core isn't a battery? Or if it's a combination of a battery and something else...'

Roland rubbed his chin. From the way he saw it, the mana stones inserted into the sockets should work as batteries. They were more or less an additional power source. Now a new idea dawned on him, what if they worked in a somewhat different way.

'The mana stones don't fully remove the need for a person to power the runes. They mostly just lower the requirements by a set number, they sometimes even lower the deterioration rate of the runes... What if instead of a regular battery it was some kind of cleanser or purifier? What if instead of adding ambient mana from the air it cleansed it from some kind of impurities and thus increased the power output in that way?'

This started making sense now. If he imagined mana as a river filled with mud water and the mana core as a dam with a filter on it. The mana crystal would filter the muddied water and only let the clean water back into the stream.

He had presumed that these crystals just stored mana and added some after being socketed into the item. Now he had another theory but if he was right then the socket needed a whole new design.

He brought out a new piece of paper and got out one of his pencils. His entire room was a mess and the floor was littered with his schematics and non-working diagrams. His fingers worked fast as he had done this multiple times already. His high dexterity stat only added to the hastening of this process.

In about an hour he had a finished schematic of a sword socket for a mana stone. It was connected to the dual rune with the mana slash and thrust skills. He waited a second before activating his debugging skill but when he did his bottom lip began to tremble.

He had previously created this combination rune and already received the experience for it. Surprisingly adding the socket which was apparently just called a slot had given him some bonus experience. He modified the schematic slightly after running it through his debugging skill and gained another 100 XP for it. This opened up a new revenue stream for him. He could probably modify all the old rune schematics to have slots in them and gain some bonus XP.

This wasn't important that much now though. He had finally managed to create the fabled design that he was trying to reproduce for months. He had even gained an upgraded version of his old title. Apparently discovering new techniques in his profession did help him to gain things besides skills. He was quick to check his new title out and was pleasantly surprised by the explanation.

He wasn't sure how much of a bonus this would be but anything that boosted his crafting skills would be appreciated. Even if it was just 1% it was worth it in the long run, the crafting process was always lengthy and this could hasten it by an hour or two.

He had spent almost the whole night continuing his research and now dawn was upon him. Roland already knew what his new creation would be. He already had made the sword and would just need to make a few adjustments.

The easiest way would be to punch a hole through the pommel and insert the gem into it. The hard part would be to make the crystal-like object-fit without falling out. He still had the mana stone from that hobgoblin and could try to insert it there. He wasn't sure if there was a specialized skill or way to make the mana stones fit the sockets.

'I could try some glue... or maybe polishing it...'

He scratched his head a bit while feeling drowsy. He had already spent too much time on this tonight and his sleep resistance skill was reaching its limit. It would probably be better to just turn in for the

night. He could pick it up in the morning and try a couple of crafting techniques to embed his marble-sized mana stone into his freshly created magical sword.

Roland really hoped that there wasn't some kind of special skill required for this procedure. He didn't really have even the basic knowledge to start experimenting on those slots. Now with a working schematic, he could investigate some more. The upgrade to his title even showed him that trying things yourself was far more rewarding. If there was some kind of implanting skill he might even be able to figure it out himself.

It might even be impossible to attach a working slot for a premade weapon and he would have to recreate it from scratch. Though, that would have to wait for another day. He was dead tired. His eyes burned from focusing on rune schematics all day, tomorrow he would get back into his research. Maybe with some luck, he would be able to make that gauntlet he always dreamed about...