

Runesmith 73

[Chapter 73 Slow new start.](#)

‘Clink’

‘Clang...’

The sound of a metal hammer against metal was heard. It echoed throughout this closed room while the magical sparks illuminated it.

Roland that didn't seem to have grown into his body was hammering away on a shield. Each time he delivered a blow with his hammer a strange runic pattern appeared on this tear-shaped piece of metal.

This process of hammering continued for a few minutes before the youth had enough. The shield that he was working on was examined before being put away to the side to lean against one of the cellar walls.

‘I really need a furnace...’

Roland looked around his ‘workshop’. It didn't have much, he had a tool rack hanging on the wall along with a thick wooden crafting table. He also possessed his old anvil that was in the middle of it all but he was lacking a few key elements of this workshop. He was missing a forge without which he couldn't really do much. There was also room for a smelter but that was a bit less important than the forge.

Without a proper forge, he couldn't heat up the metal, without softening the metal shaping it was difficult. His strength did increase but bending steel and iron into shape was above his abilities. Also doing such things to unhardened steel wasn't such a smart idea.

Roland had some leftover gear from the bandits and from some older creations. With how the rune structures burned through the steel he wouldn't have much left after prolonged use. Even now, his steel arming sword was already eroding.

Swords like this weren't that thick, with prolonged rune usage the internal structure could crumble. This could lead the blade to snap eventually, it could prove deadly in the midst of battle.

While thinking about the future failure of his sword he looked at the mace he received from his bandit encounter. This item was made from deep iron which was better than hardened steel. Be it durability, hardness, and the most important mana resistance.

There was quite a difference between this metal and regular iron. While regular iron could sustain a couple of charges of his magical runes, deep iron could manage at least ten times that amount. Repairing it also removed less material which would let the weapon survive for longer.

He looked at the mace and gave it a couple of practice swings. He could see some cracks here and there in this iron mace. This was all thanks to his Runic Blacksmith's Eyes that let him see all impurities and blemishes of this weapon. The way it was made was also quite crude which was also why it was ranked low.

Even he with only a few years of blacksmithing under his belt would be able to make an intermediate version of this weapon if he had the right materials. Though it wasn't really the fault of the craftsman

that made this weapon, it was just old and overused. It was normal for weapons and armor to drop in rating when identified after some time. Only masterwork items made from the most resistant metals could last for generations without degrading.

“I could probably wedge a stone into the handle and give it an impact rune. The durability is only at 64% but it shouldn’t break until it goes below 30%... I hope...”

The impact rune was one of the first runes that he came across. He could place a common version on this item and not worry about the metal deteriorating too fast. This magic rune worked by increasing the weight of the item it was inscribed on.

When swinging this mace he could make it several times heavier. Force was just the multiplication of acceleration and mass, he was only increasing the mass in this equation to deliver devastating blows. This rune was strong but hard to work with. Activating it too soon or too late would just mess up a person’s momentum.

“Better to also place a hardening rune on it. It Will cost more mana but it won’t break that easily.”

He continued talking aloud, a hardening rune that was sometimes also called the strengthening rune made items more resistant to physical attacks. It worked by coating the weapon in a thin layer of mana that helped in absorbing physical shocks. It was an active type of rune so placing it on armor would drain the user of their mana quite fast.

Roland had already fiddled around with the deep iron metal. He had the three slave collars to the side and already knew that inscribing on them would be troublesome. Without softening the metal with some magical fire this metal was hard to work with. He would be able to manage it somehow on unsoftened resources but it would significantly increase the crafting time.

He didn’t really have any other options at the moment. He could try making his own forge but he wasn’t really good at building those. He also didn’t swipe the old bellows from his old workshop as he was in a rush and also lacked space.

Roland could also attempt to make a new version of the forge that utilized his magical runes. He could replace the bellows with a wind rune. The forge itself didn’t need to have some kind of special design, it only needed to spit fire, the more condensed the better.

The problem as always were the materials, for a magical forge he would need a lot of deep steel or iron. One from regular metals wouldn’t last him long. He also needed something to fuel this forge. Runecrafting while also inserting mana into the forge would strain his mana reserves even if they were abundant for his level.

“I better get to work then...”

He decided to work on the mace first. The mana stone would be attached in a crude way for the time being. There would be a lot of hammering and bending involved but without any alchemical glue, he could only wedge it in by force.

He did this by forcing a small opening at the base of the handle with one of his hardy tools. The opening was slightly larger than the mana stone in question. He then gently hammered the opening shut while trying not to damage the hilt along with the stone.

Following this a lengthy process of runesmithing took place. The unsoftened deep iron proved to be quite hard to work with. This forced him to run out of mana several times before he was done with the runic structure. In the end, he had a half baked weapon with a dual runic structure.

Both of those runes were common runes. They were hard to perfect even for him who had spent years training his craft. The difficulty was also increased by the fact that this weapon was made off deep iron. This all without the forge which made the whole process tedious.

He was more familiar with the impact rune so it came out better. The materials he was working with were also hard to work with so it would take him some time to perfect everything even with the available highest quality schematics.

“This will do.”

He took the mace into his hand and gently inserted mana into the runes. The moment the impact rune was activated he could feel the weapon getting heavier. The more mana he infused the more his arm started to shake from the added weight. The other rune was also activating along with the impact one, he had set it up so that the two operated together.

Roland looked at the heavy mace that was glowing in a faint blue light. It was given a poke with his hammer to test the hardening rune. It did indeed absorb some of the shocks, the gentle taps were fully defended against. He could see the ‘shield’ struggling only after he smacked it harder.

The new weapon would be more of a backup against stronger monsters. First, he wanted to train his swordsmanship skill to its fullest potential. It was the one that he was most experienced with skipping over to blunt weapons at this point could impede his progress.

He wanted to at least max one of his weapon skills to the 9th level before trying his class change. It could aid him in getting a new battle class. Getting more than one up would be nice but he would probably reach the level limit before his skill limit in that situation. Getting a tier 2 class and profiting from the added stat bonus was something that he wanted to get as fast as possible. In this world of unknown dangers, strength was paramount and he was now very aware of that.

Roland dropped the mace to the ground after inserting too much mana into it. It had taken him two days to create this item and he was now quite hungry. He had gone through some old rations but he was now in the mood for a cooked meal. His kitchen didn’t have a stove yet but he could probably craft himself a runic pan to fry things on it. He just lacked the oil to use it as a deep fryer.

It was time to go into the growing city. He had been here for a week now and had gotten the house in a condition that he could live in it. The hinges on the doors were replaced but the windows were still nailed shut.

Luckily for him, this was an island with a warm climate. The nights were slightly chilly but with a blanket, the windy house didn’t bother him that much. The workers that would be coming in a few weeks would need to fix some things. The rat-infested attic was riddled with holes but he had cleaned it with some pressurized water. Some of the wooden floors would need replacing but that was a problem for the future.

“I should head out.”

He grabbed his clothes from the side. He would be going lighter this time around he didn't expect any trouble while in town. Roland moved his hands to his helmet and looked at it.

"Do I really need this?"

The steel helmet wasn't that comfortable but it did aid him in gaining experience in heavy armor proficiency. This wasn't the dungeon though and he would only be going to the city. Did he really need to hide his face? It had been some time since the events in Edelgard.

Did that strange cultist lady and the warlock really take a good look at him? He also remembered that she stabbed him through the shoulder with some kind of cursed blade. If he didn't down his potions while going down the stairs he would be dead from the poison. Then there was the curse that he was lucky enough to have enough money to cure.

The cult might think that he was already dead. Not like they would be stupid enough to go right back into Edelgard after that night to check. Without that spire relic that produced the illusion, they wouldn't be able to have the element of surprise. They might have been more concerned with the two tier 3 dark elves that were their match. Both of them were healthy the last time he saw them.

Roland could only think of one way that they could find him here and it was by ways of magic. His trail was cold by now, no lower-level trackers would be able to follow him plus they would need a personal possession to start.

That dagger did draw his blood so there could be some occult magic that could home in on his location. But he wasn't sure that long-range tracking magic like that would be pinpoint accurate. Maybe they would get a general location, maybe only pointing to this island and not even the town he was in. Roland was tired of looking over his shoulder; it wasn't a healthy way of living. It was time to give it a rest and move on with his life, he would tackle that trouble when it came.

After deliberating for a moment he decided to not put his helmet on and go with some regular looking clothes. He wouldn't be able to hide that he lived here anyway. Roland was planning to place one forge closer to the log cabin. He was going to act as a regular blacksmith which meant that he couldn't hide his face forever. At least not in town, while out adventuring he would keep the helmet for added protection.

He finally left his house after locking up. The way to the real workshop down below was hidden behind an illusion spell. Only people tier 2 and above with high detection skills would be able to see through the spell. There were also some detection spells that worked but not like anyone had reasons to believe that there was treasure in this house to bother with something like that.

After a long walk to town, he was there again. It looked busy as always and he could even see another caravan arriving just like the one he was part of. There were more young adventurers amongst them, hope for riches and fame clearly visible in their eyes.

There were many people coming in and going, he had already seen some of the youngsters getting injured. Not everyone had extensive battle training against monsters when they were young as he did thanks to his noble upbringing. Most people thought that weak monsters like goblins or those slimes didn't pose much of a threat.

They were dumb, slow, and weak but their attacks hurt like hell when they landed. Roland already witnessed some people getting burn marks from the slime lava-like spit or the fire skeletons.

One on one they weren't much of a problem but there were certain areas in the labyrinth where a group of them could lurk. The slimes sometimes stuck to the ceiling and tried to land on a person's head. To the inexperienced thrill seekers, even a little monster like that could prove deadly.

He could kind of tell which ones of these would not be having a good time in the coming days here. He himself was taking a slow approach to the dungeon and slowly fighting the unfamiliar monsters to see how they acted. Only after getting accustomed to their attack patterns would he move on to the lower levels.

Just like with the other dungeon that he was in, the difficulty steadily increased. The lower levels started getting bigger and more monsters in larger groups appeared. There was also a possibility of an irregular monster that was stronger than the rest showing up, a person had to be careful.

He had enough maturity to see this fact but the regular youngsters had their heads in the clouds. They probably just wanted to get their treasures and hit it off, most of them were poor, daughters and sons of farmers or fallen nobles trying to reclaim some of that lost honor. Taking the fast route was hard and there were many bumps along the way, Roland had also learned that during his travels.

'This place doesn't look that packed.'

While walking he finally arrived at one of the town restaurants. This one was named the 'Happy Rooster' and like its name, it mostly served poultry-related dishes. He would love it if there were something like a chicken nugget in this world. He would have to settle for unseasoned chicken breasts or legs instead.

The seasoning was mostly something rich merchants or nobles could only afford. Restaurants that were serving to commoners didn't even bother with stocking anything besides sugar, pepper, and salt. Even that heightened the cost of the meal by a large margin.

He was already used to the bland food but it was still better than what he could make himself. Without a high cooking skill in his repertoire, he wouldn't be able to make anything tasty even if he tried. He had some points in the lower version of it but without a class that used it, he wouldn't be able to level it up further.

Roland looked around at the new faces. The town was growing, it would probably take a couple of months or even years before everything settled. He had arrived here sooner than he had anticipated and the city wasn't in a good state yet. Even the auction house that he wanted to use as a means of selling his wares was still being renovated.

The other adventurers were also waiting for it to show up. Selling everything at the guild wasn't the most lucrative thing a person could do. With time the facilities would be set up but this would take some time. Roland wasn't in a hurry though, unless his old enemies came to his doorstep he could relax and wait.

Training in the dungeon during the day and making repairs to his runic items during the night was his new schedule. His aim was to get to tier 2 within a year. Bringing his home into working condition was a second priority but that could be done with just money and time.

[Chapter 74 Renovation and Auction.](#)

“Okay, Wayland was it? Do you want to add something to the project before we start?”

“Give me a second...”

Roland grabbed a large parchment with a diagram on it. It wasn't a schematic of runes or anything close to that. It was the plan of his house, on this piece of paper he could see the dimensions and layout of his new home.

This was the house plan along with the blueprints that the construction company he had hired was working on. He was a bit surprised at how modern they looked, the floor plans were quite detailed. By the looks of things, these people were experienced, professionals.

The man he was talking with was the foreman. He was tasked with keeping the workers in check and that everything went smoothly on the construction site. People like the architect or the company boss weren't here so he was the one responsible for it all.

Roland had already listed what he wanted. He wanted to have the whole building checked and renovated. All the broken boards on the floor were to be replaced with new ones. They would need to check if the brick walls were structurally safe.

He had made some improvements to the old design. One was the iron bars in the windows that would make getting in a bit more difficult. He also ordered the construction workers to fence up his entire property. It wouldn't be used more as an indication not to trespass.

Getting through a fence even with barbed wire wouldn't really be hard. People already had superhuman levels of strength and agility, vaulting over a two or three-meter tall wall was easy. That didn't mean that there wouldn't be some surprises waiting for any trespassers on the inside.

Roland went over the house blueprints once more before giving them back to the person in charge.

“How long will it take?”

“Hard to say, a few days, a week at most. It would be best if you found yourself a place to stay till we are done.”

The foreman was a regular human being like him, his workers were quite mixed. He could see a large man that was part of the Goliath race, there were two dwarfs and even a gnome there. The smaller races had higher dexterity so they would probably be responsible for things like painting the wood or replacing small moving parts. The large muscular man would probably have to carry all the heavy gear and dig up the ground for the new fence.

“Yes, of course...”

Roland expected something like this to happen. The thing that would be the most annoying was the special coating to preserve the wood. They would apply it with a large brush on fresh planks but it would give out an intensive smell.

It would be quite hard to spend a night in a place like that. A person would get headaches if they inhaled the vapors so he would need to move out for now. The log cabin would get the same treatment so it

was better to move to an inn for the time being. The last option was camping out in a tent on his own land.

He decided to move to the city, for now. He could use this time to visit all the shops and find out where everything was. The town was expanding fast, the construction workers were quite fast. Their specialized building classes allowed them to complete everything with minimal errors.

Roland was surprised but there were some advancements with building materials. This world even had its own version of cement and plaster-like substances. The alchemists were responsible for that. They mostly mixed some exotic ingredients together to get similar results. Monster remains were also important in making those mixtures which made dungeons quite the hot commodity.

This world had its own unique set of technological advancements. If he compared it to a strategy game he would be in a civilization that abandoned modern science in favor of magic. Instead of steam or combustion engine technology, they were shifting towards mana technology using it as fuel.

This made a lot of sense as it was a reusable source of energy found almost everywhere. It was in every living being but mostly in the air. A person just needed to know how to absorb this abundant energy source. Even the mana stones only purified it for an increased absorption rate without producing it themselves.

Roland's next big task would require him to harness this abundant source of energy. For this, he needed something akin to a battery. He actually had an idea of how such a thing was possible. One part of the equation was the mana stones that you received from monsters and beasts.

He actually considered creating either a steam or combustion engine. With his blacksmithing skills making, he would be able to make a piston and cylinder that was required for those. Customizing it to work with runes would be the tricky part.

The problem was with how these runes weren't that customizable. He could place a small detonation rune to push the piston in the cylinder that wasn't the hard part. To actually make it work he would need the detonation rune to activate at set intervals. Intervals that needed to change if he wanted to. Otherwise, it would only spin on one set speed while constantly drawing his mana.

He had something in that theme with his grindstone but that one used a set runic structure that applied a constant 'push' in one direction. It was quite a simple setup that constantly drew mana from the user. It was a simpler design over the engines from his old world but it also required more power. A periodical infusion of mana to an impact rune would use up less energy while also conserving some momentum.

He theorized that such a mixed engine would be more powerful and it would use less juice as well. It would also require a more intricate runic design as well as a piston with a cylinder that fit into each other tightly. Producing something like that with the tools that he had would be hard, if he was off by a millimeter the detonation would be unfocused, and the loss of energy during the motion would make it ineffective.

He could also go with a more primitive steam engine design. He would only need to place a rune to heat up some water and make the steam push it instead. This would produce less power but also a simple heating rune was quite energy efficient.

'Would be nice if I could play around with the settings of those runes. There will be a lot of trial and error involved in making an engine like that, also not sure about the uses...'

The biggest issue with bringing a hybrid engine into this world was its uses. He could probably slap it together and have it run in one way or another. But what would that give him? Could he get something out of that mechanical force that was produced?

He could make the engine spin around to power a drill. He could tweak the design to get a push and pull motion but what of it? He could already achieve this effect with the runic designs if he tweaked them slightly. The biggest question was if he could turn that energy into something valuable.

Roland did make some calculations and did think there was a way to work something out. The hybrid steam engine was just one part of the equation, the other one was what it could produce. With the addition of a generator, he figured that he could produce electricity. Now came the big question, could electricity be stored as mana in some way?

The lightning element was something that existed in this world. It was considered a higher tier school of magic and more difficult to learn. People with an affinity for it were rare amongst the mages that existed. If you had it you were considered gifted as lightning was very potent at delivering high amounts of damage.

With this Roland believed that electricity could be very potent as a power source. He just needed to find a way to store it as mana into something. While thinking about this he headed back into Albrook. It was time to look over the city again, he had spent most of his time going between the dungeon and his own house. This left the new town mostly unexplored.

After a little jog, he was in one of his favorite restaurants, he was mostly here because the food was cheap while still somewhat tasty. After about a month of being here, certain things had changed. One of them being that the new auction house was going to be opening this very day.

The new owners had rushed its production and some of the halls weren't finished but they were opening it up with one of them being usable. After finishing up with his food he decided to check it out.

This reminded him about the time that he visited Edelgard for the first time. He also used the auction house to get all of his money for a long time before he was scouted by the gnome boss. Maybe if he refused him at that time he would be still in Edelgard selling his improved scrolls or now runic weapons.

He did gain a lot by signing a contract but in the long run, it didn't pan out. Opening up a business was still something that he was thinking about but now was not the time. The auction house could be used for selling his wares instead. He didn't plan on opening a workshop yet, he didn't have enough time to work full-time in it yet.

"Welcome everyone to the grand opening of Albrook's official auction house! With the help of the mayor..."

Roland had arrived just in the nick of time to witness a gnome in a top hat and a cane doing the

Announcement

. This was someone from the auction house, might have been the owner or the announcer. Next to him stood an older man in a tailored suit, he was of the human race and looked about sixty years of age.

From what Roland knew this was the town mayor, if he was here then this place was probably being sponsored by the noble that owned this city. This spot would be very lucrative for anyone so owning the auction house would bring the noble and the city a lot of money.

‘They will probably forbid any other auction houses from opening. Or it will take some bribing for an opposing auction house to get started. Maybe some heavy taxation if the lord of the island agrees...’

This was nothing new, the rich got richer while the poor were forgotten. It was very smart to get into the auction house racket. This was the only place where regular adventurers could sell their wares and hope for a good price. Most of them didn’t want to bother with things like selling, they would rather get drunk at the pub or hunt more monsters.

Things like mana cores and monster fangs could be dropped off at the adventurer guild at a minimal loss. But getting a deal for some kind of exotic crystal or a magic blade that was found in a chest was harder. Thus the auction house would be the preferred means of selling. Other adventurers, merchants, and sometimes even nobles would visit such places to spend their money.

Unless you were friends with some kind of shop owner or blacksmith this was the best place to drop off your loot. The people from the auction house would take care of everything. The client only needed to return the next day to get his coins without worrying. That is if their item made it through the appraiser, not every little trinket would be put up for auction.

“With that I would like to invite everyone to the first Albrook auction, free of charge of course!”

Roland perked up at the ‘free of charge’ part of the

Announcement

. He had spent a lot of time selling his scrolls at the auction house in Edelgard. He didn’t really have the time or money to buy anything back then though.

He was also hired to work at the company so the need for selling or buying wasn’t there. Everything he needed was provided by his old boss at a lower price than what he could get it for at the auction. After a while, he kind of forgot about that place and only visited regular stores instead.

‘Maybe there will be something interesting, something that could help me with my generator problem.’

Other people were also interested so it would be a packed hall this time around. After further investigation, the auction wasn’t actually ‘free’, at least not for anyone that wanted to buy something. The people could stay in the back and watch but if someone wanted to buy anything they had to buy a small paddle with a number on it. With it, they could raise it when they were interested in something like in all the other auction houses.

Roland wasn’t that strapped for cash, plus the fee was only one small silver coin. With this, he was also able to get a seat for himself while anyone that wasn’t willing to pay had to stand in the back.

The auction house looked like a small theater, quite similar to the other ones that Roland visited before. This stage was slightly bigger than the one he saw back in Edelgard. This might have been because this

was the only one in this auction building for now. While back in Edelgard there were smaller ones for the less expensive items.

“We would like to bring your attention to our first item. This is a “

The person on the stage was a beautiful lady of the elven variety. This is something that never changed, they always brought out stunning looking women to attract attention. With a beauty on the side, the buyers were willing to spend more. Something to do with the urge to show off in front of a potential mate. Or so Roland heard from someone mentioning it during a random pub conversation.

The items that were shown weren't anything out of the ordinary. Some sets of quality healing and mana potions, some enchanted weapons, and sometimes some unique devices here and there. Due to this auction house only having one stage the items varied by the quality and there wasn't any rhyme or reason to how they were presented. Roland expected this issue to be fixed the longer the auction house operated.

Roland gave out a yawn, he had spent at least an hour sitting here without seeing anything worthwhile. He was mostly here to look at the item prices, they didn't differ much from the ones back in Edelgard. Everything cost slightly more though which made sense as the weapons were mostly imported from outside and people had to account for shipping prices.

“This next item would be perfect for a present...”

Another thing came, the woman placed a box on the auction table. It wasn't that big, around fifteen square centimeters. It looked to be some kind of music box, after placing it down the woman pressed a button from the side. Roland was using his mana detection skill while looking at the items which prompted him to notice something off.

“Hm?”

He squinted while looking at the contraption. A little horse popped out and started spinning around. The tune wasn't anything special, it sounded like a generic lullaby. That wasn't really what he was interested in, he looked at the item in question with the help of his skills. He could see runic pathways running all over it, some of them connecting to a mana stone that was sticking out on the side.

‘Is that thing absorbing mana from the surroundings and running on it by itself?’

Normally any runic item required the user to insert some mana of their own. This one seemed to work in a different way, it was apparently activated by a press of a side button. This fact alone made Roland interested in this item.

“The starting price will be... four large silver coins.”

He looked at the lack of paddles in the air. The item was a magical device but not really useful for the adventurers here. It was more of a present for a female family member. It could shed some light on his mana engine theory. If the item was working without needing an outside mana jolt then it had to be storing mana in a different place. He decided to raise his number, luckily no one else looked interested in this item so he would get it for cheap. After investigating it further he might be able to get through his bottleneck.

