

Runesmith 75

[Chapter 75 Moving forward.](#)

Roland was sitting with a cup of tea in his hand. It looked like he was in a small dim-lit room. He was taking a sip of some kind of black tea that was still giving out steam.

There was only one small table, one chair, and a small single-person bed squeezed inside of here. This made the young man recall some of the old dorm rooms that he used to stay in back in another life. That time he used to hate it now it might have been something that he looked back to fondly. It was a simpler time, no monsters or evil cults were lurking in the darkness to get him back in those days.

On the small table lay a box, a music box to be exact. It wasn't exactly in working order any more as the springs and screws that kept it in place were laid out on the table. This was the very same item that he had bought at the auction house.

He was now examining it after getting a place to stay for the night. The inns in the city were still jam packed but the adventurers still evaded the ones that cost a bit more. They would rather spend the night in the stables while spending the rest on food and alcohol. Then the following day they could spend the rest on health potions for the next expedition into the dungeon.

This cycle continued till the adventurer in question either made enough money to rent themselves a room or they perished while trying. Not many adventurers could afford a home like Roland did, gathering up a hundred small gold coins would be something that would take years. Maybe if someone were lucky to find themselves a magic blade to pawn off, they could speed up the process.

"This is a bit unexpected, I guess the answer was right under my nose..."

Roland picked up a part of the music box that had runic patterns on it. Lucky for him this item was of that variety and not a regular enchanted one. The weapons and armor that were auctioned off were mostly regular enchanted ones instead. He wasn't sure but maybe the drops in the dungeon were of that type of magic equipment.

What he was holding was just a plate of metal made from deep iron. The runic structure was condensed on it which made it look smaller than whatever he could make. This item was certainly made by someone that was more skillful than he was. That didn't mean that he wouldn't be able to recreate it, with his debugging skill this would prove rather easy. The only problem would be improving on the design with his own knowledge.

Roland expected to find some kind of special device or an item responsible for this music box working. This he did but instead of one, it was a combination. The small plate that had the runic components in them also had a socket. This socket contained a marble-like item, an item that he was familiar with.

'A slime core, huh?'

This slime core was the magical mineral that was apparently able to store mana inside of it. There was a specialized runic structure around this socket that kept the slime core inside of it. He had examined it before dismantling the music box. What he saw was a siphoning effect that funneled the mana from the surrounding area into this slime core.

This core worked as some kind of generator or battery. It was constantly discharging the mana it had stored back into the runic structure. Thus the music box was able to function, the button on the side that activated it just moved some parts and connected some runic traces.

There was also one mana stone present to purify the mana from the surroundings. It was directly connected to the slime core, probably allowing it to work more efficiently by being in closer proximity to the 'battery'.

From how it looked the runic components only needed a little jolt of magic at the start before they would work on their own. Besides the slime core, there was deep iron involved. He could clearly tell that the runic components were not deteriorating that fast.

The small rune design and its simplicity gave the item longevity, even when constantly turned on it was working just fine. It looked that if the magic rune didn't pass a certain threshold of mana usage, the runic components that it was composed of wouldn't break down.

At least not when made from this deep iron. If this was some kind of other metal with a special mana gathering attribute was unknown. He would need to test it out on other metals to see if there was a difference.

"Well, this clears up a couple of things. The person that made this was probably an experienced runesmith, you don't see many runes at the high grade."

This rune was of the 'high' grade which was something rare. Most of the items out on the market were of the intermediate grade, while high and above were hard to find. This was also why the wares that he made sold quite well. Probably the craftsmen weren't willing to give away the knowledge of their designs to just anyone.

Thus most runesmiths ended up with average knowledge and made average grade runes. Improving on the design was a lot harder without a lot of trial and error. This would be a time-consuming process, it could also be costly if something went wrong. Badly connected rune components could be volatile, even explode.

Roland was just happy that he could skip that process with his debugging skill. If he didn't have it he would probably be still stuck scribing low-level runes. Maybe he would have to go work for some kind of runesmith that was willing to share their knowledge with him.

With this skill, he had attained a degree of freedom but this also caused him to have some holes in his basic knowledge. Was this battery structure something hard to make? It didn't look out of the ordinary. He was a classical case of someone that started running without having learned to walk properly first.

Roland had placed the piece of metal to the side and got ready to go to bed. With this, he had something to look forward to. He had also ordered a basic forge to be made at his home, the building company luckily was able to do that. They would place it in the log cabin for now while his secret workshop remained underground.

There he was planning to build his own furnace, one that was composed of runes. Through this he could only do after completing his runic generator design. Now after looking over this toy it was finally a possibility. First, he would need to get his house back, he would also need copper wire and magnets.

This was something he would need to create an electric generator, this was a device that converts mechanical energy into electrical power. How this worked was common knowledge from his old world and it wouldn't be that hard to produce with his current skills. The hard part would be to harness this electrical current to then produce mana.

He also needed it to produce more mana than there was introduced into the runic structure. Without that the generator idea would fall flat. The first prototype would probably be quite crude but he needed to test if this thing even had the merit to be improved later on.

He had copper and magnets in his workshop already. He had gotten a few strong ones for his refrigerator design; they sealed the doors quite nicely. While thinking about the next few days he went to sleep. Before anything could be done he needed his house to be in working order.

The following day Roland woke up early, he visited some shops to try and buy anything that could help him with the future mana generator design. One of the problems would be placing wires along his house to deliver the mana to all of his appliances.

The ethereal pathways had a very limited range, so he would need to actually attach them to his generator. The people of this world did make wires for fences so he would be able to just buy that. Those wires were thicker than electrical wires but that would just make it easier to inscribe the runic traces on them.

They would also deteriorate quite slowly with only runic pathways on them, without runic components that had a spell structure the metals didn't suffer that much damage. He could also place more than just one pathway for the mana to travel through the cable. This was all still only theoretical as he still needed to make the devices capable of using these cables. Those would mostly be power tools like a drill or a belt grinder.

This would have to wait till he got his hands on some better crafting utensils. For now, Roland used his time to check the shops for anything useful. The rest of his time was spent down in the dungeon, leveling up to level 75 was still very much on his agenda. It wouldn't hurt to have a tier 2 class sooner rather than later.

So he did, this time venturing to the levels below. What he found were more skeletons that were on fire along with more slimes. He was sure to hunt the latter ones more as the slime cores could be used for his generator. Roland wasn't sure how many of them he could use but he could hold on selling them until he figured out that part.

Those two weren't the only monsters that he found down there. He was facing another common creature that he had faced before, it was a giant rat. This was a variation of the old foe that was dark crimson in coloring.

The only difference between this one and the ones he saw back in the city of Carwen. These ones were of higher level and also somewhat fire-resistant. For him that was over level 70 this thing wasn't much of a problem. With a couple of stabs from his arming sword, the monster fell. It was quickly replaced by another one, these large rodents rarely wandered around alone.

'This is good practice...'

Roland used this chance to train himself when fighting multiple opponents. The trick was not to get yourself surrounded. This was easier in these corridors as he just needed to move back while not letting any of the monster rats pass him on the side. If he wasn't careful he might find himself up against a wall. That was still better than being surrounded, at least he wouldn't need to watch his back.

He made quick work of the large rats that were about the size of a middle-sized dog. They were kind of a waste of time as the experience he was gaining didn't even go over 10. None of these critters had any mana stones in them either and rat teeth or claws didn't sell for all that much.

'I need to get to the lower levels, I won't get much experience unless I face off against lower leveled tier 2 monsters...'

This was a fact that he already knew. Ever since attaining his third tier 1 class leveling up had gotten hard. Even after battling tier 2 monsters and all of those bandits he wasn't rewarded with that much. Using his time to craft high tier runic equipment would bring him better results. He was also running low on the crafting schematic exploit that let him get to this point so fast.

Roland pulled out the labyrinth map and started examining it. He was now on the starting section of the third floor. The monster attacks were more frequent here and the corridors were also wider. This allowed the monsters more area to maneuver, there was also a chance of them sneaking up behind a person from one of the side corridors that were passed.

While taking a moment to eat something he looked for the fastest way to the level below. He wanted to take it slowly but these monsters weren't proving very lucrative. Any of the monster body parts he could sell weren't worth more than the simplest magic scroll he could make.

Farming them for money wouldn't be something worthwhile and the experience was also bad. This was still the safest way of leveling up his warrior type skills so he was bearing with it. After eating he ventured forth to do more battling but now if there wasn't a mana stone or a creature core he would just leave everything behind.

This labyrinth apparently ran ten levels deep, each level increased the monster level by about 5. On the tenth and final level, you would face creatures close to level 50. Some monsters at the second tier could be seen there which meant that most adventurers below the silver rank wouldn't be seen wandering there alone. At most a full party of steel adventurers could hope to survive down there.

He continued on his way going down to the lower levels. The further down he went the less adventurer he saw. This meant that there would be more loot to find but also more monsters to go through. At the higher levels, a person didn't run into that many monsters as all the other adventurer parties were taking them out.

At the fourth level, he battled another new monster, it looked like an iguana and could actually produce something akin to a fire breath. This was also the first time that he actually needed to activate his magic shield to defend himself against this flame breath.

It was quite large for something considered a baby. While the rats were the size of a middle-sized dog this one would be akin to a larger breed. It was close in specs to a full-grown wolf and it had some sharp teeth to go with it.

Roland blocked the fire attack with his shield. The activated magic was enough to not make him feel any heat, the flame resistance rune was working just fine. The moment the monster ran out of breath was the time for him to strike. This time around he used his mana thrust rune to skewer the red lizard looking monster. The Salamander wasn't able to react in time, taking one hit from the torrent of mana was enough to slay this creature.

The monster's head exploded into many tiny chunks which bloodied the wall behind it. He could feel that this one had a mana stone hidden in its abdomen. He needed to stick his hands into its guts to pull it out. It wasn't the best feeling but after having slain many monsters he was used to this sort of job.

He looked at the defeated monster while wondering if there was really nothing worthwhile for him to take from it. At times like these was when he recalled that having party members had its upsides. He wouldn't need to go through dead monster carcasses at least. Before he could decide on his next move another one of those salamanders appeared. Probably attracted by the stench of blood.

'Training my shield proficiencies is quite easy in this sort of place...'

He looked to the monster that was ready to breathe out some fire. His shield started glowing in a blue hue that had a slight red tint to it. The moment the fire attack connected with its magical surface it started getting dispersed.

Roland noticed that defeating this type of monster was quite easy if you managed to resist its breathing attack. It remained stationary afterward, probably the usage of mana left its body unable to evade any attacks coming for it in that time frame. If other monsters like this had the same weak point would be something that he needed to find out later.

"GUOHHH..."

After this Baby Salamander bit the dust another one appeared. It looked like he was attracting unwanted attention. He preferred to take the sneaky approach while biding his time but this would also be a good opportunity for gathering experience.

Roland smirked a little bit and used the handle of his sword on his shield. A loud sound was produced to get the monster's attention on it. This one instead of delivering a fire attack decided to charge towards him. Its mouth opened up wide as it tried chomping down on one of his legs.

But the only thing that monster got to chomp down was cold hard steel as Roland delivered a shield bash to its head. With his blacksmith levels of strength, it was enough to momentarily stop it in its tracks.

With a little poke to the eye socket, the monster was down for the count just like the other ones. The spot he was in was slowly getting crowded by the salamander monster corpses. As it looked this wasn't all as he heard the shuffling of lizard claws from the distance coming his way.

"I guess the fun starts from this level on."

Roland looked over his gear that was still in working condition, there was enough juice left in the runes for him to stay here for a couple of more hours. Maybe now he could get those skills up at a more moderate pace.

[Chapter 76 Crimson Adventurer](#)

“7th level, this place looks the same like all the other levels.”

“Wasn’t that hard to get here, not long and we will reach the 10th level!”

A group of young adventurers that looked to be in their late teens were going through a dimly lit path. It was a group of four people, two males, and two females. The girls had lighter armor on them while the two men had heavier. It looked like the two were warrior types while the other were the more nimble variant.

“Don’t get overconfident Rudy, you always had a big head.”

A girl with neck length brown hair called out to a red-haired boy. He was the person that mentioned the 10th floor of the dungeon they were in. The whole party here was composed of humans with the girl that spoke out at the front. She was in the middle of kneeling down and looking at an out of place floor tile.

“Never bad to have confidence!”

The young man chuckled back while looking at the girl on the ground. He could see her moving her short sword towards the floor tile. The ground here looked like it was made from large square-shaped rocks that were just dropped into position. They weren’t very even but they were enough to let people move through them without stumbling around.

“Did you find something Keira?”

The other girl from the party called out, she had a bow in her hand and a similar short sword to her side. Before she could prod for more answers she heard a strange noise coming from the side. The moment that Keira poked the rock slab enough a couple of darts shot out from the wall. With no one walking forward the darts impacted the wall on the other side with no one getting hurt.

“Just a small trap... there are a few more of these ahead so give me a minute.”

“Take your time but we need to hurry, we only have a few hours till sundown. The trip back will probably take us an hour from this level.”

“Can’t we just go through, those things don’t look that deadly to me.”

The other male moved forward. He was the largest person here at over 190 cm of height with a more robust build. He was heavily armored, with a shield and sword combo.

“Why do we have to only have meatheads in our party...”

The girl that was disarming the trap moved up while frowning. The girl with the bow just shrugged without saying a word.

“Go ahead Miron, I’m sure the poison in those darts won’t be a problem. Hope that discount steel armor will be able to hold out.” The armored man looked at the girl named Keira and then over to the darts that were embedded in the corridor wall. They looked quite sharp and also punched through the hard

wall surface cleanly. The man gave out a grunt before backing away, probably not sure if his armor could take it.

“That’s what I thought...Sansa, please watch my back.”

The girl with the bow nodded, her hair was long and obsidian. She had a more eastern look to her. She stood watch with her bow drawn while staring into the distance of the long corridor. At the end of it she could see some kind of opened gate. It looked similar to the entrance of the Albrook city dungeon. The girl knew that that type of structure indicated something, there could be monsters or treasure behind it.

It took the girl named Keira about twenty minutes to get rid of all the traps. The party of four was now standing at the end of this passage. The guys moved forward with the later, heavier armored one at the helm. He had his shield up and with his sword in hand, he was inching toward the unknown area.

“There might be monster’s inside, be careful.”

“Yeah, yeah.”

Rudy complained from the side but followed closely after the main tank of the party. After venturing through the larger opening at the end of the corridor the party ended up in a wide-open area.

“Nothing in here?”

All of them entered after looking around from the entrance. The room was large and it also had a high ceiling. They could also see another opening with a gate. It looked like another there was another tunnel past this room and nothing else.

“Only one exit?”

Keira commented while looking around. There wasn’t anything in here, no monster remains or signs of other adventurers. Not like any of those would be left for anyone to see. After about half an hour any untouched body would start to vanish. This group of young adventurers knew this fact but none of them had ever witnessed it first hand.

“We should go, probably other people came through here and the monsters didn’t re-appear.”

It didn’t look like there was anything in here. Keira looked around but she didn’t seem to see anything out of the ordinary. She decided that it would be best to just move on and hurry it up.

“Might just be a dummy room, you find them from time to time. These dungeons are large, not all of the rooms have traps and monsters in them.”

“Thank you for the lesson, Professor Keira.”

Rudy replied while chuckling, the brown-haired girl stomped her foot in anger a bit but then just moved towards her party members. The two warriors moved to the front of the party again while the two girls trailed slightly behind.

“Wait...”

They were about halfway through the room before the girl noticed something.

“No... quickly, run for the tunnel!”

Keira called out while bolting towards the exit on the other side of the large room. There was a faint clicking sound, soon after the whole room started rumbling. The walls started shaking around, small openings in the walls closer to the high ceiling started to open up.

The other three adventurers were a bit surprised by their friends’ reaction but they quickly ran after her. Before they could reach the exit a wall of rock slammed down, Keira was just quick enough to run into it. She started banging on it with her fists but the wall was far too sturdy to be broken. The party of four was clearly trapped in here as the opening that they came through was also sealed by a similar wall of hard stone bricks.

“We are trapped... this was a trap...”

“Hey Keira, I thought you were supposed to be good at detecting traps?”

“I don’t know... this trap is different... there was magic involved, I can’t sense magic traps yet!”

Keira and Rudy started shouting at each other while the two other party members looked around. They could see the holes opening up wider till they were about human-sized. They looked large enough for them to go through but before they could explore that possibility they heard a hissing sound coming from those large holes.

“You two stop arguing! Enemies are coming!”

The two turned around and were quick to spot what their archer friend meant by that. Out of those openings in the walls, monsters started to appear. The first thing that this party of adventurers saw were bright red eyes, eyes that were reptilian in nature.

One of the monsters dropped down to the ground, its clawed raptor-like legs caused the ground to crack. The creature that they were looking at was reptilian in nature, it’s body was coated with crimson leathery scales. It was the height of a smaller human at about 170 cm but some of its companions were slightly larger.

It had a lizard-like head along with a crown of spiky frills that extended from their foreheads to their necks. It had a mostly upright humanoid-like posture but was leaning forward slightly. Its hands were composed of four large fingers, the second one that was closer to their body was twice as long as the others. On it, they could see a large claw that was probably meant for ripping into their opponent’s flesh.

“Lesser Troglodytes!”

The monsters continued to drop out of those openings till there were about ten of them in this room. The two males from the adventurer party moved to protect their female companions. The monsters started to quickly fill up the locked area, battle was the only option left.

One of the Troglodytes that was the closest to them charged forward. The other ones behind him were quick to notice the juicy enemies as well. The monsters opened up their mouths while hissing, their sharp teeth were on display along with their drooling tongues. It was clear that those large lizards were set on devouring these four human adventurers.

Miron stepped forward with his large tower shield in hand. Before the monster could swing that giant clawed hand on him he shot towards it. The monster slammed into the thick steel shield with his head and was flung backward. Soon after it found an arrow sticking out of its eye socket as Sansa the party's archer used her bow skills on it.

The monster convulsed on the ground but this didn't scare off its companions that charged in, their faces filled with maddened rage. Soon the party of four found themselves surrounded, there was nowhere to run and the two warriors had to contend with two or three monsters each.

This still left some to slip past their barricade and getting dangerously close to the two girls. These two had roles of supports and specialists, Sansa was having trouble using her bow with the lizard monster so close by. Keira had to use her shortsword to defend herself but she wasn't that good in a direct fight, her class being a thief.

Rudy managed to step in to defend his companion, before Keira got ripped to shreds by the lizard's talons he pushed his long spear through its head. The girl was saved but this act of bravery would cost him dearly as the Troglodyte behind him used this chance to sink its teeth into the youth's shoulder.

"Rudy!"

The girl called out in panic as she saw the monster biting her companion but she was in no position to help him. Another monster was on a collision course with her, it looked that even if they slew some of them new ones appeared out of the openings in the walls. Their whole formation was broken, it looked like this would be their last adventure.

They would end up as a nice meal for these lizard-like monsters but before they met their demise a loud sound was heard. Following it one of the monsters dropped dead in its tracks a large arrow made out of sharp ice going through its head.

"Get down"

Someone shouted out from the distance before a hail of ice arrows descended into this large open room. Each one of these magical attacks flew towards a monster, the aim was true and the Troglodytes were unable to resist this high tier magic. It only took one hit from a magical arrow to deliver a fatal blow.

This gave the four adventurers time to reorganize themselves. They huddled up together while pouring healing potions on their wounded friend. The monsters quickly changed to a new opponent that was standing on the other side of this room. From where he came was a mystery to these people but they wouldn't complain as he was helping them.

Seven of the monsters were killed instantly but there were still more coming. A group of three of them charged at their new opponent while the four adventurers watched from afar.

The person that came to their help looked to be in a heavier set of armor, similar to the one the warrior from their party was wearing. It was in a dark red color and had some strange runic patterns inscribed into them. They couldn't see the man's face as his face was hidden behind a sturdy metal helmet.

It was rounded to fit a person's skull with an attached front visor. This face-covering visor was wide with a rectangular slit for vision and had dotted cut-outs on the lower half of the face for ventilation. The

visor of this helmet seemed to be filled out by something akin to dark-colored glass that was glowing from time to time.

This person had a large kite shield in one hand. The other hand wasn't holding any weapon but there was a mace strapped to his side. The monsters continued to charge at him but he didn't seem to care. The group of adventurers wasn't sure why this person looked so relaxed but soon they would understand.

This armored 'knight' moved his hand up at the moment the monsters were only a few meters away. The gauntlet he was wearing started glowing for a moment before a discharge of ice shards was seen. The lizard-like monsters found themselves being shredded by ice magic that quickly turned them into statues. The ones that didn't die right away were promptly finished off by a swing of that mace, one hit to the head was all that he needed.

"Is that a silver rank?... Maybe a gold?"

The group let out a sigh of relief as they saw the new adventurer overpower these monsters with ease. It was clear to them that this person was of a higher tier compared to them by how many skills and spells he was activating. Someone below tier 2 would not be able to use that many enchanted items even if they had them.

Three Lesser Troglodytes remained, they all charged at the man in the armor. The adventurer didn't retreat, instead, he took a step forward. The metal plates along with his boot gave off a faint blue light that changed to orange the moment it touched the ground below.

This sent some kind of ripple through the earth below. Thick spikes made from hard rock then burst from the ground impaling the charging monsters. They were strong enough to pierce their hard bodies, he didn't even need to finish them off after turning them into large pincushions.

The room that was filled with monster howls and screams of people was now quiet. All of the monsters were now dead and the openings in the walls were starting to close themselves. The large pathways through which this group of adventurers came in were also opening up. The slabs that were blocking them were sliding back up, probably to recharge before the next time the trap would be sprung.

Rudy was grasping his aching shoulder through which the Lesser Troglodyte bit through. He had received healing potions but it would take a few minutes before this injury healed itself.

"Are you okay?"

"I'm fine but... what are we going to do about him?"

Rudy answered while whispering the last part to Keira. They all were now looking at the person that saved them. The person was just walking without a worry in the world and sticking a dagger into the monster's bodies. It took them a moment to notice that he was taking out a mana stone each time he did that.

He was totally ignoring them, without even a side glance he was continuing to go around the monster corpses plucking out mana stones. He was strangely proficient at it, normally they would need to go through the entire body and hope for the best. Only after finishing up with the stones, they saw him

going towards them. His height was close to their party tank which made him look more imposing from close up.

“Are you new here or just stupid?”

“E-excuse me?”

Keira was the one to reply, the other party members moved closer to each other. The faces of the two men from the party scrunched up but they weren't willing to shout at the person that cleared out this trap by himself.

“Didn't you get the labyrinth map?”

“A map? Was there something like that?”

The girl looked to her party members for answers but they just shrugged without knowing what this was about.

“That's why noobs are...”

The man muttered under his breath before speaking up again.

“Never mind, you should go up to the 6th floor and level up before returning here, if you continue like this you will die...”

The party got a quick lecture by the person that saved them. He was clearly an adventurer that was a tier above them so they kept their mouths shut. Soon the man in the dark red armor ventured out through the door that they wanted to go through. The adventurers were left here with all the corpses, only the mana stones were missing but they could probably disassemble them for some money.

“Keira...”

“What is it Rudy?”

“...What's a noob?”

The two looked at each other while the footsteps of the adventurer that saved them started to slowly fade away.