

## Runesmith 83

### [Chapter 83 Silver Rank Test](#)

A somewhat nice looking deep steel gauntlet was laying down on a table. Roland looked at his newest creation and couldn't help to slide his hand inside of it. The feeling was quite nice and he could move his fingers around well.

This gauntlet that he made was in the 'glove' style. There was the option to go with a 'mitten' design that offered more protection for his fingers. That type of gauntlet offered more defense but at the expense of dexterity. He went with the more dexterous variant that fitted his high dexterity stat more.

The right one was done but he still needed to assemble the left. First, though it was time to perform some tests. This gauntlet was fitted out with four common grade mana stones that were at the sides of the vambrace. Thanks to the ethereal pathways technology he would be able to connect all of his armored parts together later.

This didn't mean that it was wise to place the mana stones away from runic structures. He attempted to place the mana stones in a hidden structure away from the moving parts while not exposing them to harm's way. But a concentration of mana stones in one place would cause the runic circuits to overload. They just couldn't take the enriched mana output that was injected into the system. Thus they needed to be placed close to the runes they were supposed to affect.

He looked to the side where a small plate made from deep steel was just sitting there. This was a part that he used for research purposes. It was in a square shape and in each corner there was one common grade mana stone.

The whole surface was filled out with runic symbols, he moved his finger towards it to give it a poke. Through his finger, he injected a trace amount of mana to look at the previously pre-programmed effect.

This metallic plate lit up in an orange light before spitting out some flames. In a moment an orb of orange light was produced but this wasn't just a regular flame orb spell. The blob of light started to change shape and soon words started appearing. He looked at the spelled out words that said 'Hello World' and thought back to his previous life. Something like this was very common among programming circles as this was mostly the first thing such a person would create.

Before moving on to his gauntlet he took out a small piece of metal. It looked like a pen made from deep steel with a mana stone attached to the top. This was just a simple device that aided him in runecrafting. He poked the desired rune on this plate and injected his mana, soon the magic code started shifting into a different structure. The magic writing that was shining orange changed into a blue hue and exuded a more chilly aura.

"Changing just the code is much faster... it also doesn't affect the other structures so the runes don't deteriorate..."

The runic code inside the runes was something that he learned during his stay in that trial library. He had taken some basics from there with which he could now perform such tasks. His understanding was still basic and mostly at the lesser rune level. It would take some time to go through all these runes again. The old knowledge he gained by matching the hardware components started feeling trivial but it

wasn't useless. Those parts were still important to get the highest grade and lower mana consumption while maximizing the rune's power. Such a thing wouldn't be possible by just playing around with the runic code.

'Is it possible to create some kind of runic operating system?'

This was the most important question. The code could be copied over after it was inscribed into the runic component. These runes he was working with were like hard drives that kept everything stored. This also brought another problem, he would need to make a lot of backup storage. His intelligence stat made his memory quite good but even if he knew the whole code, writing it over and over again into each rune would just waste too much time.

Roland looked at his created glove and then at the schematic that was hung up to the side. He had already decided on the spells that he would inscribe along with the rudimentary operating system that he would use to switch between spells.

In the past, he would have to separate the runic structures into separate armor pieces if he wanted to have multiple spells. That or fit more separate structures on one piece of equipment and then inject his mana manually into the one that he wanted to use.

Now on the other hand he could connect everything into one big grand runic circuit. He would store the pre-programmed spells in strategic locations. If he wanted to activate an ice spell through his gauntlet he would just jolt the corresponding runic program. The 'icearrow.exe' would then activate and shoot out the spell it was assigned to.

At this point in time, this was the most he could do. This wasn't quite that proficient as with more of those executables the tougher it would be to activate them. It was like opening up a folder and having to manually click on each executable. He would have to do it each time to produce what he wanted, then if something was wrong with the code the whole thing could explode in his face.

There was also one other big weakness of such a system. It would only require his enemy to sever one of the runic traces that went towards his glove. If it was broken the signal from the program would not be able to go through to execute the spell. The only way for him to then cast this spell would be to use his mending skill to fix the structure or repair it with runecrafting. In the middle of battle, this would be quite a tough thing to do, which would force him not to take many hits.

'Luckily deep steel is quite resistant, the runic pathways shouldn't just break that easily...could also attach some auxiliary runes on the inside of the armor...'

He rubbed his chin while contemplating his design again. He really didn't want to do this again but he didn't feel like he was quite experienced enough to account for everything in advance.

'This is going to take a while...'

He grasped his hammer from the side and resumed his work, time flew by and in about a month his creation was ready.

'Now for the finishing touches...'

A full set of deep steel armor was placed on his workbench. It was fitted out with runes and the shiny mana stones were sticking out from a few places. It was nice and shiny as he had polished it to perfection before finishing up. This was also the problem, it was a bit too metallic and out there but he had just the thing for this occasion.

Roland took out a small bottle of red liquid and slowly brought it over to the breastplate and plackart. He was sure to let a drop of this strange red liquid drop on the breastplate. The moment it collided with the metal he could see a change. The whole metallic plate started changing color. From the spot, the drop fell it began to turn into a crimson color.

“Alchemists sure make some handy stuff...”

This was an alchemist concoction that was used to color metallic parts. It wasn't paint, it somehow changed the color of the metal it touched. This saved a lot of time as he never had to give it a paint job.

His new creation was ready to be worn and tested. He had made it specifically for the silver grade adventurer test that he would be taking soon. There was no way of knowing what they would ask of him, but it would either be a quest down in the dungeon or a one on one battle with another tier 2 adventurer. If it was up to him he would rather go with the dungeon run as he didn't really want to interact with others or show his hand yet.

After the paint job was done another annoying task was before him.

“Now I have to get this thing on...”

He had already worn heavy armor before but it was still annoying. There were many straps and procedures he needed to follow to get armor like this on. Normally knights that used armor like this would have squires to help them get dressed but he had only himself. While grumbling he began putting the whole thing on. He also used some pre-bought chain mail to cover some exposed parts.

In time he was ready, deep steel was slightly heavier than regular steel. Even with this, he didn't feel very restricted by the weight. His stats were already quite superhuman so walking around in heavy armor wasn't much of a problem.

His choice of weapon was an arming sword-like before along with a kite shield. The sword looked like his old sword but it was made from deep steel. With everything accounted for he left towards the city, shield on his back and the sword to his side. This time he would just go on foot to see how comfortable this thing was during prolonged walking. He had tested the runic spells before coloring already so this was the only stress test remaining.

The guards at the gate didn't react to him anymore. He was one of the only people wearing crimson heavy armor wandering through the streets. This world had far more peculiar things than men in edgy armor so no one really thought it was that strange. Even if he changed his helmet to one that looked like a skull they wouldn't even bat an eye.

While passing through the gate he noticed a party of adventurers walking out. They looked like they were battle-ready and they had more members than a regular party had. From a quick glance with his improved analyzing skill, he could see their levels. All of them were close to level 50 but none of them was quite there.

Probably soon they would be able to reach tier 2 status and just like him take the advancement test to a silver rank adventurer. While passing he also noticed someone with a large backpack trailing behind this six-man party. But being a bit preoccupied with his own things he didn't really care.

With some time he was finally at the adventurer guild building. On the inside, it now looked like a proper guild with the usual layout and some drunken adventurers inside. The clatter of his armor brought attention to him but only for a second before people turned to themselves. He wasn't the only armored person that kept his helmet on either.

The lines to the receptionist ladies weren't as long anymore and quite free today. He moved over to the line with the elven woman that he got his adventurer card. Even though she didn't work as fast as the woman with the glasses she sometimes gave him better deals. Maybe today she would let him have an easier test.

"We are having a 5% discount on all health potions if you buy them as a bundle of five!"

He was greeted by a sales pitch right off the bat, the only response he could offer was a shake of his head.

"Oh, if you're not interested in health potions then how about mana potions? We just received a new batch recently!"

The lady sure was diligent but he just rolled his eyes as he knew that buying directly from the adventurer's guild wasn't as good as going to a proper alchemist shop. It did save up on some time and sometimes the deals were good.

"No, thank you. I would like to take the silver rank test..."

"Silver rank test, oh my. Do you meet the qualifications?"

Before the woman could start listing down the terms that he already knew he took out his adventurer card.

"Yes, I am above level 50 and past my class change here is my card. I have also done enough missions to qualify for a test."

The elven girl just smiled and took the card into her hands, after a small moment she gave a big smile while looking up.

"Ah, if it isn't Mr. Wayland, almost didn't recognize you, is that a new set of armor? You look great in it, you sure do love dark red don't you?"

Roland just stood there not sure why the elven lady was talking so much. She did seem more chatty with him than with the other adventurers. He wasn't sure why was she interested in him in some way? Or did she just like talking to people that mostly respond in nods, grunts, or very short sentences?

He wasn't someone that was that versed in women so he didn't know but for now he decided to try to hurry this whole thing up. This new armor of his needed to be tested out in the field so he hoped he would get a task to descend into the dungeon. Facing off against a tier 2 guild member wouldn't be bad either but then it would be an open spectacle.

“Yes it is new, could I get my task sorted out? I don’t have that much time...”

“Mr. Wayland... you’re no fun...”

The elven woman showed a rather cute pout which took him by surprise but soon enough she was back to smiling.

“Please place your hand on the orb...”

He followed the instructions but just like last time his status was corrupted. It was somehow visible that he had a tier 2 class but the elven lady still raised her eyebrow.

“This status... can Mr. Wayland do something about it?”

Roland just shook his head from side to side as he didn’t really want to reveal his true stats or classes to this guild. There wasn’t any specific law that he needed to so he would refuse.

“Quite stubborn... please wait a moment, I’ll have to consult one of our associates about your task... you will also have to pay a fee.”

The sun elf lady went away into the back room while Roland waited. He tried thinking about what kind of tests or tasks guilds usually gave the new adventurers. Normally they made a person do some kind of mission that was for silver rank adventurers. Here in this city with a dungeon that would entail going into the lower levels, probably hunting some monsters close to tier 2 or ones that had already evolved.

In about ten minutes the woman returned but she wasn’t alone. Next to her was a somewhat tanned man. He had a robust build and looked to be in his mid-twenties. He had short dark hair and a somewhat cocky expression on his face.

“Is this the new fledgling you want me to test?”

Roland got eyeballed hard by this man by what he was saying this could only mean one thing. Instead of getting a dungeon quest, he would need to face off against this guy.

“Yes, this is him.”

“Mr. Wayland let me introduce you to Armand, he will be your sparring partner for your guild advancement test.”

This man was about the same height as Roland which was close to 190 cm. His frame was slightly larger and it was obvious that he was some kind of warrior.

The other adventurers were quick to notice this as they moved closer.

“Hey, Armand is going to fight someone! Let us go watch!”

“How long do you think that guy will last?”

“Five minutes tops!”

Tests like this were considered an event for these adventurers that didn’t really have much to do. They would also bet on the winners or on how long the party that seemed to be weaker would last against a

trained guild instructor. Such instructors were either retired adventurers or current ones that took it for a quick payout.

'I guess I'll have a big audience...'

He couldn't really refuse to take this test. It would seem strange and the adventurer guild would probably not take him seriously afterward. It was up to them to decide on the test and he would have to go through with it.

From what he could tell this test would take place in a sort of small arena behind the adventurer guild building. This place was something you could rent out to train with others and sometimes even some sanctioned fights between fighters took place.

'I shouldn't need to beat the instructor, exchanging some blows should be enough for him to measure my strength... but... I'm not sure he will let me off with just that.'

He wasn't sure why but the guy that he was facing off against looked quite into it. The guy looked like someone that liked to fight. Normally an instructor wouldn't go all out and just test a newly ascended tier 2 class holder. Some of these instructors had their own way of doing things though.

"Please grab a weapon and get ready, we will begin the test shortly!"

Roland looked at the training swords on the side. He was deemed to be a warrior type and using sharp weapons was forbidden. The armor he was wearing was the more important part, with it on he hoped to get through this test undamaged...

#### [Chapter 84 Fight at the guild.](#)

"Did you hear?"

"No what is it?"

"Armand is going to test some kind of a newbie."

"Armand? Didn't he break that last guy's legs?"

"The same, we should go check it out. I heard his opponent is quite an eccentric."

Two men were chatting outside the adventurer guild building. They soon moved around it towards the training field in the back. As they arrived they could see a small crowd of people already there.

"What are the odds?"

"Five to one in Armand's favor. We are also betting on how long the new meat will last in the ring."

People were placing bets on how long the man in red armor would last against the hired guild instructor. The man was an active adventurer who liked performing these sorts of tests for one reason or another. Other adventurers were just here to see a show as everyone liked to see newbies getting brought down a peg by more experienced seniors.

"You weren't lying when you said he was an eccentric... What's with that color? and are those runic symbols?"

The two men that had come late looked at the man in the red suit of armor. To them, he looked like a son from some kind of rich merchant. Normally no one could afford a full suit of runic armor, they could even see mana stones peeking out which showed them that it was a more expensive version.

This new silver rank candidate was in the middle of picking out his training weapons. He wasn't allowed to use swords that had a blade for safety reasons. Though even without a sharp edge, someone at tier 2 could easily kill someone with a direct hit from a blunt weapon. The ones performing the test were aware of this. They would be compensated for the danger and any healing potions were on the house.

Armand that was this instructor was on the other side. The two were in a fenced round ring of sorts with a lot of space to maneuver. People could see him put on two metallic-looking gauntlets and a cute looking lady was helping him strap them in. It didn't seem like the man was perturbed by his opponent that was clad in full body armor, his face was relaxed and filled with smiles.

"Will it really be that easy? That guy shouldn't be that weak."

"Are you stupid did you see what they are wearing? Armand clearly has the advantage here, those gauntlets will dent that armor in no time." One of the men was quite sure that the guild instructor had it in the bag. From this guy's perspective, the man in red armor was clearly some kind of shield warrior, a tank in gaming terms. His armor would be good against weapons with blades but weak against blunt force. His opponent Armand was a Pugilist, someone that specialized in close combat with his fists.

When those gauntlets landed on the red armor it wouldn't matter how hard it was, the blows would get through to the internal organs. There was also the agility aspect, the man in the bulky armor would have trouble contending with his opponent's speed.

"I bet this fight will be quite boring... either he goes down with a few hits or keeps defending with that shield... but that training shield won't last that long..."

Tier 2 fighters reached past the human limits, with enough punches a shield made from iron or steel would give out.

"Yeah yeah, quiet I think it's starting..."

The man in the crimson armor went with a shield and a sword. The sword was blunt and would count more as a blunt weapon than a real blade. The only thing that made it better than a mace was its lower weight, it was more of a finesse weapon.

The crowd cheered as the fun was finally beginning, even more after they saw the beautiful sun elf receptionist lady there. She would be the one that gave the signal to start the battle as well as be the witness.

"Everyone ready?"

The man in red armor nodded and his opponent just shrugged while getting in a lazy fighting stance. He was clearly not taking this training match too seriously.

The signal for them to begin was given and people could hear Armand chuckling. He stood there and beckoned his opponent to attack.

"How about I give you four free hits? Think that would be fair, don't you all think?"

The people that were looking in started laughing as they knew that this man liked to play around with his foes. This was clearly a tactic used to agitate an opponent and make him do sloppy decisions. With what looked to be a heavy shield warrior against him, Armand would find it easy to evade any of his sluggish attacks.

“Well, what are you waiting for newbie? Attack me, or are you scared?”

The man in red didn't seem to be taking the bait at first but after some more taunts, it looked to have worked. He took a step forward with his shield in front and sword to the side. The people around expected some kind of blind rage-filled charge and they got something similar.

That crimson armor started glowing in green color. This glow was mostly coming from the embedded green mana stones. Anyone that was able to sense mana opened up their eyes wide at this phenomenon. This was just the beginning as their curious faces quickly turned to ones of bewilderment.

The man took off in a sprint but in reality, it looked more like he was flying forward. The speed at which he was going was not something a tier 2 beginner should be able to produce. Armand barely reacted by dodging to the side, his expression was similar to everyone else here as he felt something graze his cheek.

A long streak in the ground was formed as the man in the armor zoomed by. It looked as if this person had trouble containing his own speed. The greenish glow that the red armor produced faded away and the silver rank candidate turned to Armand that rubbed his cheek. Even from here, everyone could see that he was bleeding, they weren't sure how but it didn't look like this would be such an easy fight for this instructor.

People started moving closer as now everyone was interested in what this person had to offer. Was it some kind of special class or was this armor responsible for this sudden speed boost, only time would tell.

Soon the bout resumed as the armored man glowed green again and charged forward. This time around he was even faster, Armand was unable to keep his word and defended himself against the practice blade with his metal gauntlets.

A quick exchange of sword against fists took place. Sparks started flying but it didn't seem like anyone was giving an inch. The clash ended after the Pugilist landed a hard hit on the armored man's shield. The impact caused him to slide back and a small dent appeared on the slab of metal that the armored warrior was holding.

This tradeoff was followed by a pause. It seemed like the two fighters were about equal but the man in the red armor didn't take any hits. He managed to slip in a couple of sword strikes here and there while also skillfully defending himself with his shield.

The crowd that was looking at this was quite astonished. What was supposed to be a quick little training exercise that should have already ended in Armand's favor was still in full swing. It even looked like the fresh tier 2 adventurer was winning as his agility was above this trained pugilist.

“Did he lie about his level or something? Are we getting scammed?”

The people that bet against the warrior in red were now worried. This could have been some scam that pitted someone that was above Armand in levels and in experience.

“That red guy’s movements did seem a bit sluggish in the beginning... was he playing it off?”

Some of the adventurers noticed that the armored man had started off slow, he even fumbled around a couple of times. Now on the other hand it looked like he was slowly gaining the upper hand. It was as if he was someone that was just learning to use a new weapon and only now was he getting the hang of it.

“Armand doesn’t seem to be in on it at least... “

One of the adventurers pointed at the tanned man that took on a different fighting position. His darkish skin started changing color into a more reddish tint. This color shift was accompanied by bulging of muscles. While the adventurer was already muscular before this now he just looked like an over-pumped bodybuilder. All kinds of veins could be seen coming off those rippling muscles.

It was clear that he activated some kind of Pugilist skill. The effect showed as his speed and strength were at a different level than before. A punch connected with the borrowed shield that almost instantly collapsed onto itself. The man in red armor had to abandon it while jumping back, he did it by throwing it at his opponent.

The Pugilist just smacked it to the side but it looked like it was just a faint from the armored man’s side. His armor changed its hue to green again as he tried to deliver a sword strike to his opponent’s back. The hit went through but the result that he was probably hoping for wasn’t there. The flimsy steel sword bent backward after it connected with that muscular body.

The adventurers that bet against the man in crimson cheered. It looked like it would be over soon, there was no way for a knight type to win against a martial artist type in hand to hand combat.

“It’s over fresh meat!”

Armand had already forgotten that this was just a test of strength for a new silver rank adventurer candidate. The elven lady started even shouting out to stop the fight but the man wouldn’t listen. He was already charging forward with his fist aiming for his opponent’s head. The armored man responded not but evading but by blocking with a cross arm block.

Everyone expected the man to just be sent flying with a broken forearm but this wouldn’t be happening. The armor glowed in a blue hue right before the fist connected with the block. He slid back slightly but he stood his ground. Armand had over swung a bit so he was left open for a counterblow. The armor glowed in a red hue now before the punch collided with those rippling side muscles.

The crowd shouted out as they saw the hit connect with Armand’s liver. It was clear that this hit hurt, Armand was clearly in pain as he stumbled backward. He had some air knocked out of him for sure and his opponent wouldn’t let him regain his footing that easily.

For the people here it was strange to see a slugfest between a martial artist and a man dressed in full body armor. It didn’t look like he was even that good at it but whenever Armand tried to retaliate. The kicks and punches that he threw and that connected didn’t seem to be that effective. Each time a flash of blue would cover that armor and somehow cause those huge fists to not be as effective.

Just by attrition, it looked like the newbie was winning. At one juncture the two got in a bout of strength, their fingers interlocking.

“I’ll break your fingers!”

Armand’s eyes were quite bloodshot from the prolonged fighting and his muscular body had taken some hits. Normally a Pugilist would have the strength advantage but it didn’t look like the other party was budging.

The armor turned red again and the adventurers could hear a crunching sound, this appeared to be poor Armand’s fingers that were getting pushed in by his opponent. The man gritted his teeth and was quick to deliver a headbutt to the armored man. Both of them jumped back while glaring at each other. Before the fight could continue further a womanly voice called out from the side.

“That’s enough, stop!”

The elven receptionist woman jumped into the ring to stop the test. The crowd that was on the sides out started shouting and booing as the victor was not decided.

“Why are you interfering? This isn’t over!”

Armand called out while trying not to flinch, his hands didn’t look too good after some of the fingers were broken. He was quick to set them in place though, it didn’t look like this was his first rodeo.

“Mr. Armand please calm down, this was only meant to be a test. You too Mr. Wayland, please stop...”

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Roland gave out a sigh of relief after the elven lady jumped in to stop the fight. He wasn’t sure how long he would be able to keep this up. The man he was facing was well over his level and had higher physical stats to boot. It was all thanks to his armor that he was able to survive this long.

He didn’t want to stand out too much so he decided not to use obvious mage spells during this whole bout. Testing out his new gear in the field also caused him to go with another approach.

The constant color shifting was an indication of his switching to certain preset programs. This was an idea he came up with after remembering an old game he used to play. The green color would cause a massive boost to agility, the blue color would be the defensive mode and red would increase his strength.

By switching between these modes on the fly he was able to somewhat overpower this higher level opponent. This was just a runic program that switched between buffing spells and the corresponding mana stones that increased certain stats. Thanks to this he could either switch between specialized boosts in one stats or spread it out evenly.

It took him some time to get used to the agility boost the most but luckily his opponent wasn’t taking him that seriously. This allowed him to field test this armor of his which he thought was a big success. There was some lag between switching the various modes and he accumulated some damage as well. This was something that he expected and now he just needed to work out some kinks.

“No, I won’t accept this. It wasn’t his own strength, it was all that armor, you saw it!”

Roland wanted to go ask if with this he would get his silver rank but it seemed that his instructor wasn't seeing it his way. It was clear that the man didn't take the draw well. Roland knew that if he started to use some of those common grade attacking spells he had that his opponent would have probably been down for the count a lot sooner though. He also wasn't able to use his own shield and sword. Those two wouldn't have been trashed that easily.

"Would you tell that to a monster that used an enchanted sword?"

"What?"

After getting closer to the elven receptionist and the man that was his instructor he had to chime in. From Roland's perspective, this armor was a part of his strength, it was something he made and there was no shame in using it. The man was clearly acting immaturely, trying to shift the blame on the use of magical gear.

"You know what I mean, do you want me to take you on with my bare fists?"

Roland's point was easy, each class had its strong and weak points. Him using magical gear was clearly acceptable. Though it didn't seem that other people saw it his way, probably because no one knew that he made this armor himself. In their eyes, he looked to be some spoiled rich kid that was using magic equipment to come out on top. He could clearly see some disdainful faces from the side but after his show of might, not many people would speak their mind in front of him.

Before another fight could break out the elven lady was quick to pull Armand away. Roland on the other hand was told to wait in the guild building. Back there he could see the gazes of the other adventurers, this was something that he had hoped to avoid. The only good thing that came out of this was that he was able to test his new armor.

In about fifteen minutes the elven lady was back out again. He was even handed a healing potion on the house. What she told him afterward only cemented in his mind that people here looked down on individuals that used runic equipment.

"Due to the test being inconclusive you will be given a secondary mission."

For a moment he wanted to go find Armand and shove an ice arrow up his behind. Luckily the request was something that aligned with his own plans. It was to go to the dungeon and get some tier 2 monster materials. With this in mind, he left the adventurer guild, his armor didn't suffer that much damage so he could finish this up in one day.