

## Runesmith 93

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“Go for the neck.”

Roland shouted while trying to cheer. Both he and Bernir were a bit to the side while two monsters were battling. One of them looked like a red-colored salamander while the other one was a ferocious wolf puppy.

The reptilian monster was a bit bigger than the puppy but the wolf didn't seem to care. It danced around its foe while biting into its flesh. The moment the salamander tried to retaliate the small wolf was gone and to the other side. With time these small nibbles added up and the final blow was delivered.

Agni jumped on top of the half-dead salamander and pressed its fangs into his opponent's neck. The moment the teeth sunk into its flesh a surge of flame was injected into it. The Ruby Wolf activated its special skill to deliver the final blow. The opponent went down, dead and unmoving.

“Woof!”

“Great job, he really is improving really fast, Boss.”

Bernir called out while moving over to the dead monster.

“That he is, there is a small mana stone close to the lungs.”

Roland also moved closer, his little monster had been training up his skills. It had been about a month since they all ventured inside of this dungeon now. At first, Agni was barely able to contend with a L1 rat but after he started leveling the progress picked up.

The little guy was quite smart and his forte was speed and agility. With the increase of his stats, he started to get smarter. With this intelligence also came wisdom as Agni was able to learn from all of his fights. Sometimes he won, sometimes he lost and Roland had to assist him. Now he was able to safely combat monsters at his own level and even ones a few levels above.

“Good boy.”

Roland leaned down to give his puppy a pat on the head. He was on the fence about this whole predicament but now he was glad that the egg hatched. The puppy wasn't hard to bring up as it only required food and shelter. After two weeks he also stopped peeing in the house and now even had his own dog house outside. Though that didn't keep him from trying to sleep inside.

“You are improving at a high pace, luckily we can somewhat share our experience.”

Roland glanced at his own and Agni's status screens.

Name :

Roland Arden L 77

Classes:

T2 Runesmith Lord L2 [ Primary ]

T1 Mage L25 [ Secondary ]

T1 Runic Mana Scribe L 25 [ X ]

T1 Runic Blacksmith L 25 [ Tertiary ]

HP

2478/2478

MP

7354/7354

SP

3366/3366

Strength

66

Agility

46

Dexterity

94

Vitality

66

Endurance

75

Intelligence

125

Willpower

114

Charisma

17

Luck

10

Name :

Ruby Wolf Puppy [ L 10 ] [ Ex 67% ]

Type :

Fire/Earth/Beast

HP

129/129

MP

148/148

SP

220/220

Strength

10

Agility

20

Dexterity

10

Vitality

9

Endurance

13

Intelligence

10

Willpower

12

Charisma

16

Luck

14

Both the little beast and master had leveled up during this month. Roland only gained 1 level but he noticed that he was gaining about twice the amount of stat points that he previously did. This with his

lord class perk made his 1 level at tier 2 count for 4 levels at tier 1. With this, he felt like he could finally become stronger.

The wolf pup was leveling up faster than his owner. This was because there was some experience shared between monster and master. When Roland defeated high level foes a small part of the experience was given to his wolf.

Agni did have to be close to him for that to go through. If the distance was more than twenty meters nothing would happen. He would also gain a bit more the closer he was during combat. This was something that he had tested out at his old training spot with the Troglodytes.

He used his bombing method this time around and found his little puppy gaining a big chunk of experience. Those monsters were quite a low level for someone like him so he wasn't receiving much but with the help of his new assistant, he would at least be gaining the money back for his runic bombs.

This day they have come here to descend into the lower levels. Roland had given Agni some time to level up but he himself had remained stagnant. After defeating the Ruby Golem he had almost gained a level already. Now after a month his experience points haven't increased by much and his skills were also not growing.

For this day he had prepared to go down below the 10th level to the fabled lava area of this dungeon. That area was still getting mapped out as it was swarming with tier 2 creatures. No tier 3 monsters had been spotted yet but the adventurers were apparently having a hard time traversing through the hotter areas.

This dungeon wasn't suited for beings that didn't have fire resistance. He as a Runesmith Lord had heat resistance and his armor. His wolf puppy was naturally resistant to a degree to flames that left his assistant.

Bernir had his own set of armor prepared with some chilling runes. The half-dwarf didn't have much mana to speak of so the armor he was wearing could only defend him against the flames.

At first, Roland wanted to just buy some cheap iron or steel armor for his new assistant. But he on the other hand begged him for something else. He wanted to make his own armor and then have runes inscribed later.

This was a good opportunity to see if he made the good choice in hiring him. Bernir did have the class and levels but this didn't mean that he would be great at crafting. This depended on his aptitude and willingness to work long hours.

Luckily the young half-dwarf didn't disappoint him. He worked tirelessly for days at the basic workshop without any runic power tools involved. Even without the fancy equipment, his new worker had managed to push through.

What Bernir required wasn't a full plate mail armor like Roland did. He needed some defense to be there but the more important thing was speed and agility. Bernir wasn't there to fight, he was only there to carry Roland's weapons and then take care of the monster corpses.

Thus he was fitted out in a lighter set of leather armor. His legs and arms would have metal plates in the form of greaves and vambraces. Roland had also instructed him to place openings for the mana stones

that he would insert later. With Bernir's lack of mana and any runic skills, he would need all the help he could get for the magic to work.

There was a limit of how many mana stones a steel armor could take. The runic structures would break quite fast but it would be enough for them to do a couple of dungeon runs before it needed repairing.

Runic structures that only utilized buffing type spells and small effect spells like the lesser chilling rune were able to last longer than active spells. Something like a fire arrow spell would eat away at the armor after each activation due to the high amount of mana being burned.

On the other hand, when there was a very small yet constant charge they lasted for a lot longer. This was also why Roland's own armor that was made of deep steel would barely suffer anything when he just activated his mana stones to give him a stat buff. Only when he actually activated a more drastic spell would the armor start to deteriorate.

After everything was finished the gear came out to be on the intermediate level, quite satisfactory. Roland himself could only achieve this level and this half-dwarf was already on his level. He wasn't sure if it was talent or just the dwarf racial trait that let them become better blacksmiths than other races.

With that out of the way, he was ready to imbue everything with mana stones and runes. Bernir was a bit afraid that he would be charged for something like this. The man was someone that grew up with other dwarves so he knew that runesmithing was a costly profession.

The two had a conversation and Roland told him to count it as an investment that he could just work down in the future. Using mana stones from the dungeon on an armor like this didn't really hurt his bottom line. The dwarves cherished their Runesmiths though so from that day on, Bernir started calling him 'Boss' and he finally learned to remember his assistant's name.

Now they were down at the 10th level where it all started. This time around the boss chamber was wide open and they could move through it. It also seemed that someone had already cleared out this area some time ago.

"The monsters haven't respawned yet but there are no bodies either. Anyone that was here previously, is probably gone."

Roland said while moving inside of the boss chamber.

"It looks that way..."

Bernir stopped before the large door and gave out a sigh. He stood there for a moment till Agni barked at him while sitting on Roland's shoulder.

"W-wait for me, I'm coming."

After the harrowing experience that Bernir went through in this room it was natural for him to take a moment. Roland didn't say anything as he understood his pain. It was already quite a show of character that his new assistant was willing to go down here so soon.

"Looks the same as last time..."

"Y-yeah..."

Both of them continued through the area, Agni was held in place as his new owner was afraid that the happy puppy could fall into the lava lake below. He was somewhat resistant to flames and heat but he would still die if he fell into lava.

Roland was taking a risk by bringing this puppy here. After watching over him for a month the ruby wolf started growing on him. Agni would even try to climb into his bed and sleep with him. This caused Roland to finally create a fitting dog house for him that Bernir with his better building skills was happy to create.

His new canine companion had started to listen to his commands. He decided that he could at least try descending to the lower levels to fight some monsters. His own tamed monster would get a lot more experience from tier 2 enemies than what they were fighting on the upper levels.

“Bernir, here.”

Agni was passed over to Bernir for safekeeping. Being a similar monster to a dog, Agni would be accepting to more people than just his master. From what Roland could tell he was seeing Bernir as part of the pack with his master as the Alpha.

“Stay in the back, the monsters below shouldn’t be able to go above the stairs.”

After leaving the boss chamber there was another flight of stairs leading to the next section. The moment the small group reached it they were greeted by hot air. Roland was wearing a full helmet with a closed visor so he didn’t feel it. Bernir on the other hand who was only wearing a simple metal headgear with his face exposed was taken aback.

“You can activate the rune now, it should alleviate the heat.”

Following Roland’s instruction, the blue mana stones that were inserted into Bernir’s armor started to glow. A thin veil of blue ice energy covered the half dwarf’s whole body and made the whole thing bearable. Agni didn’t look too happy about the change in temperature though as he gave out a rather cute sneeze.

“Well then... “

With sword and shield in hand, Roland moved down from the stairs and set foot in the new area. What he saw was a wide-open cavern with stalactites and stalagmites everywhere. There were flowing rivers and small lakes of fire present as well. The lava seemed to be pouring from the walls and into those streams and lakes alike.

There were many pathways leading in various directions. Some were wide while others could barely fit one person. This was a large open area that stretched for many kilometers in all directions. There was only one known exit to the top, which made traversing the whole area difficult without anyone with directional skills like a tracker.

“Be careful boss.”

“Yeah, I know... there could be monsters in those lava pools...”

The sector where he was in now had a larger piece of land on it with some smaller lava pools spread around. In those sizzling hot pots, there could be monsters hiding, ones that were resistant to flames.

He came prepared, knowing the weaknesses of the foes an adventurer was facing was the basics. With the degree of fire protection that he was wearing he felt rather content at venturing forward.

“SSsssssssss”

There it was, his first opponent that was crawling out of one of those smaller pools of lava. Some of them were connected to the larger lakes and rivers that were flowing in the back. Luckily none of the larger monsters would be able to fit through the smaller openings.

Volcanic Salamander L 54

It was an evolved variant of the salamander monster he saw in the labyrinth. This one was quite larger, more the size of a smaller horse but with shorter legs. Its scales looked more robust and had a more brownish tint to it that let it blend in with the darker volcanic soil here.

The monster slammed its elongated tail into the ground causing it to crack in a few places as it noticed Roland looking at it. The large salamander started hissing while looking at its target. Roland at this moment was hiding behind his shield while getting closer. He was sure to keep watch if there weren't any other enemies nearby. Without a seasoned tracker to detect enemies, he needed to be extra careful.

Soon the battle started with a bark coming from the back. Bernir was sure to hold Agni in his hands while peeking from around the corner. What he saw was the monster moving its head upwards, the lower part of its neck started bulging out and glowing in a red color as it prepared an attack.

Roland didn't need much time to figure out what it was doing. There were a few possibilities of defending against this type of attack. He chose to dodge instead of using his shield to block as this attack was somewhat slow.

The monster opened up its mouth and a ball of heated magma was flung from it. It connected with the ground where Roland was previously standing on and caused an explosion. He on the other hand was glowing in green after activating his runic structure.

This type of attack that the monster performed was quite powerful.

Even he that was wearing magical armor wouldn't come out unscathed if he just received it. It did have one glaring weakness as it left the person or monster using it open for a quick counter. Normally something like this would be better used for a finishing move on an opponent that couldn't move.

“Got you.”

He called out while pointing his hand at the creature. Roland had gotten in range for a magical attack. This came in the form of a 'cone of cold' spell that was inscribed on his gauntlet.

The surge of icy air and ice crystals descended on the Volcanic Salamander. Due to this monster living in a warm climate it couldn't take low temperatures very well. It suffered massive damage while also losing most of its mobility. A critical hit that rendered his opponent immobile was just the thing he needed. With a nice slice from his blade the head was off and the battle was won.

You have gained 358 experience

'Not bad, using magic against these fire monster feels like cheating'

He looked at the dead monster while putting his sword away. It didn't take much for him to kill it, using the creature's weakness made everything quite easy. He didn't feel like he would lose to it without the spell either, he would just need to take a bit more time.

"Okay... don't see any other monsters, the party that cleared out the boss chamber must have killed most of them at the entrance. Bernir, we will wait here for now, more should respawn soon."

Roland decided to wait at the safe spot for now. This was the first time that he was here so he needed to get used to the stronger tier 2 monsters. He liked to do things slow and steady without rushing too much into danger. With the puppy and his assistant he also needed to keep the two safe.

"On it boss!"

Bernir moved in and Agni was quick to jump on the dead salamander. He looked like a proud warrior that had slain this monster himself. Roland just smirked a bit and gave the puppy's head a ruffling. After the monster was done being processed it was time to do some grinding.

#### [Chapter 94 Windmill](#)

"Okay boss, you can go ahead."

"Hngh..."

Roland in his everyday clothes but with gloves that were glowing red was pushing a large wooden spire. It looked like a large thick wooden log with a peculiar contraption attached to the top part.

"That's it, just a bit more... now stop!"

He was quick to move to the other side to stabilize the construction. This large tower-like log was inserted into a hole and while Roland was holding onto it Bernir moved over with a wheelbarrow. In it there was something that looked similar to plaster or cement with a similar dark gray coloring.

This substance was something very similar but made with the help of alchemy instead of chemicals. With the help of monster remains this world had made its own strides in the way of construction. After dumping the contents Bernir grabbed a smaller plank from the side and started smoothing this fantasy cement out.

"It will take half a day for this to dry boss."

Roland nodded while continuing to support the larger structure with his enhanced strength. In his previous world, people would have to use cranes for something like this. With his current tier 2 stats and some help from strength-enhancing runes he was able to heft this burden.

"But boss... will this windmill work? ... isn't it too thin?"

Bernir scratched his nose while attaching some support beams to this 'windmill'. In reality, this wasn't anything like that, it was a small wind turbine that Roland finally got around to building.

With the help of his assistant, he could speed up the process. Making cables and the small parts for the propellers and generator that was inside. The cables were pushed through the large log that added



some well-needed weight. This was his first design so he decided to make the fans a bit smaller. Thus even when they would be spinning at full swing the structure would remain stable in place.

“This isn’t a windmill... this is to generate power.”

“Power?”

Bernir looked at the wind turbine and he wasn’t sure how this thing should produce energy. Though Roland was the runesmith here so he wouldn’t ask too many questions. He understood that magic and runes were a difficult theme not known by many men.

“I guess it is about time to show you some things... but first help me connect these cables.”

The wires they were using were simple copper ones. They were coated in a dark rubber-like substance that worked quite similar to its old-world counterpart. Luckily these wires didn’t require runesmithing as they were just there to carry the current towards the generator in his runic workshop.

Roland had decided to move to wind energy as keeping a boiler down in his workshop was causing some difficulties. The engine that he made was also not very efficient at all.

He had a couple of options here. One would be water energy like people used in dams. The problem was that there was now river nearby. Another option would be geothermal, with a lava dungeon nearby this could be a possibility but he needed something closer to his house.

Thus wind turbines were the next good option. He could easily place multiple ones in his yard behind his house. Even if he placed some outside his fence no one would probably complain and he might be able to buy more land if he wished for.

The biggest downside to this setup was that it was clearly visible to anyone. If a person decided to walk through here they would see some strange-looking windmills spinning around. It was clear that he wasn’t using them for grain and making bread. He might be able to say that they were for pumping water.

They were also used for cutting wood at sawmills though they saw less use in this kind of world where a woodcutter had enhanced strength and specialized skills to make everything go fast.

He noticed this trend that filled this world around him. The people here tended not to look for shortcuts to their work. They would naturally gain more skills and level up. They got faster and better at everything by just continuing to train. Most of them didn’t see the reason to invest in unique inventions. The only progress was seen towards magic and alchemy while machinery was left in the dust.

“Bark!”

“Could you stop digging in the yard...”

Roland scolded Agni who was busy digging up a hole and burying something in it. After the puppy had settled in some changes needed to be made. For one thing, he needed to remove the trip mines from the ground as the little wolf was quite happy to dig them out. Luckily Roland got to him in time before any explosions happened.

With this in mind, another larger construction plan for the defenses was fashioned. This one would eliminate the random chance of his allies injuring themselves in his backyard. With the wind turbine in place and Bernir to help him out, they would connect the electricity with the fences.

Implementing the electric fence would take a bit to make as he needed the wind turbine to power the items in his workshop first. Depending on how much juice this turbine produced he would go ahead with the fence idea.

Roland knew that the jolt that the fence would give wouldn't keep real threats away. It was more of a warning signal for people to keep out. Smart individuals would probably notice this and think twice before venturing forward. Others might just vault over this wall and try their luck inside. With unique defenses came unique rewards, without some danger there were no real rewards.

"Not having the mines around puts this place at risk... are there any automated defenses that I could build here?"

He grumbled while looking at the ruby tip of his wolf puppy. The little guy was having a blast while turning his land into Swiss cheese.

"Boss, why don't you build a golem?"

"Hm?"

Bernir moved over while whipping some sweat from his brow. The half dwarf had been taught by his father while he was alive so he knew some inside rumors and knowledge. Runesmiths were similar to other magic users by the use of their runes. Their true strength lay in creating magical items, one of those was a staple, the iron golem.

"I never tried that before..."

He had thought about making one before but his lack of knowledge kept him grounded. Now he more or less knew how such a creature would be able to operate. It was like the monster that he faced, it needed a core first. This would act as the main power source and could be bought on the market or even from the dungeon directly. In the volcanic area, some golems could be spotted, if he nabbed one of those cores he would be able to try it out.

Without any master, he would need to do everything himself. The probability of getting a golem-making manual in the auction house was slim. The Runesmiths kept their more detailed secrets hidden. Luckily for Roland he had lived in a large crafting city for a few years and golems was something that it did possess.

The only problem was that he could never examine them fully. He was left with fleeting glances here and there while the various magical automatons moved around. His old notebook was filled out with parts of these runic structures but he never tried to piece them together as he was lacking the main component. This component was the internal runic code that would make this golem work.

Even though he thought that he could somehow work out the runic structures going through the body from the golem core. The most important part, that was the control program. This golem would need to be able to move around and follow basic instructions. The ones that he saw in the city were mostly only

able to slowly move around and carry heavy items. They were mostly meant for constructions while the more combat-oriented golems were hard to come by.

The fastest way for him to make his own golem would be by buying one of the auction and then examining the program and runes inside. Then with it as a base, he would start applying his own custom-made commands.

'That would probably be the fastest way to go around this...'

He remembered how much time he lost when not getting a magical item with a mana stone in it. If he didn't get that lucky break he might still think that mana stones were used as batteries to this day.

"I'm kind of self-taught... but if you see any golems, even the small toy ones you have the permission to buy it."

Roland replied to Bernir while putting the golem construction off for now. It would take way too long to construct an operating program to make it run from scratch. Making one that activated separate runic spells was one thing, making a basic AI that could follow spoken orders was another thing entirely. It could take him several years to even come up with a prototype that would need even more time to fix.

"Toy ones?"

"Yes, some runesmiths make small automatons that can follow orders, some nobles buy them for their children, at least they are cheaper than the large ones."

He had actually seen one of those a long time ago when he first arrived in this world but that was a time that he had long forgotten and moved on from.

While thinking about some defensive measures he noticed Agni from the side munching on something.

"You really like those don't you..."

Roland narrowed his eyes while he spotted something shiny in the puppy's mouth.

"He's got quite the expensive appetite..."

Bernir commented while walking away to do some other chores while the wind turbine foundation set.

Agni had developed a strange diet after going down into the dungeon. While one of the monster corpses was getting taken apart the mana stone fell to the side. The little puppy looked at this glowing gem and ran up to it, with a big chomp the mana stone was quickly gulped down by him fully.

Roland and Bernir saw this and tried to make the puppy spit out the stone, unsure if he would suffer from such a thing. After looking through the wolf's stats no drop of HP or strange status effects were noticed by Roland. There was one addition to this status in the form of a skill.

Mana Stone Eater [Passive]

Allows for a small chance of strengthening through mana stone consumption.

This skill looked quite powerful, gaining strength just by eating mana stones seemed very powerful. In reality, ever since getting it Agni only received one status point. Somehow this skill could allow the user

to gain status points through consuming mana stones. If there was something more that could be gained was unknown.

Roland wasn't happy about losing so many mana stones to his canine companion. For now, he was only devouring lesser mana stones and it seemed that he couldn't devour more than two per day. It was apparent that the digestion of these stones took a while. If Agni tried to snack on more than one every twelve hours he would get a stomach ache.

"I hope that skill allows for a better evolution... speaking of evolutions..."

Roland glanced at Agni's stats which had gone up, his little companion was close to reaching the 25th level and just needed 2 more. When he hit that threshold he would be allowed to evolve.

From what Roland knew a Ruby Wolf Puppy would evolve into an Adolescent Ruby Wolf at the 25th level. After that, at the 50th level he should turn into a plain Ruby Wolf and be a tier 2 monster.

There might be other possibilities along the way, for instance, the more common version of a Ruby Wolf was the Volcanic Wolf. That type of monster could be seen in the volcanic area past the 10th level of the maze. There was no reason for taking that evolutionary path as a Ruby Wolf was considered stronger and also smarter than a Volcanic variant.

'If I go by this world's naming sense and that skill... maybe he'll change into something like a Mana Ruby Wolf...'

Would Roland's pup have a similar class naming scheme that he had succumbed to? His classes were one of the better ones but the names left a lot to be desired. It would still be better to go with a rare evolution even if it had a silly name.

"Bernir."

Roland called out to his worker and gave him a plan of the house that had the cable placements.

"Follow the schematic, I'll go to the dungeon with Agni, he is close to leveling up.

Before leaving Bernir with a shovel to bury the cables he had him help him get his armor on. The tamed monster along with the wind turbine and his new assistant kept him from improving on his old design. He wanted to focus on it after Agni got a bit stronger and with the first evolution, he would feel more comfortable doing so.

The tier 1 skills were easy to level up and with the help of Roland's deep pockets, he could buy recovery items for his monster. With them Agni was able to increase the levels of all his skills with minimal rest. The only one that didn't max out was the one for eating mana stones.

Depending on the evolution choices Roland was ready to wait for it to max out later. Then he would focus on crafting while Agni munched on some stones. Recently he had visited the Dungeon quite often so he needed some downtime.

"Alright boss, have a safe trip and bring back some souvenirs!"

"You sure like going through those monster remains, don't you Bernir?"

“I just need some salamander leather for my coat, that stuff is easy to work with!”

The two parted ways and Roland departed towards the Dungeon. He didn't keep Agni on his shoulder anymore but let him walk side by side. The puppy also had a nice black leather collar with his name on it.

There was one green mana stone that would increase the pup's speed if he used it. Surprisingly his monster companion was smart enough to learn how to use simple runic equipment. He only started having problems when there were more than two enchantments on it. Due to that he only put in the speed increase along with a mana shield for protection.

Thanks to this his little canine companion also earned the title of 'Magic Item User'. This was probably because not many monsters could use magic items or knew how. A regular human would not get a title like this due to this being something their race was able to do by default.

The two were back in the dungeon now. This started feeling like his everyday grind now, he killed monsters in the morning to gather materials and mana stones. Then in the evening, he enchanted some weapons and armor parts to sell at the auction house. The money was then spent on more materials to expand his workshop and the cycle continued.

A snapping of bones brought him back to reality as a flaming skeleton dropped to the ground. Agni did a little wiggle dance around the monster while sniffing but then quickly turned around. His hind legs performed the motion of burying something as if he wasn't interested in the boney creature.

“No mana stones, huh? You got a good nose for those ever since you have gotten that skill.”

They continued into the deeper levels of the dungeon but not below the 5th. Past that the monsters were above the 25th level and could prove dangerous for his little puppy. He wanted him to gain the rest of the experience by himself without getting power leveled by him.

After spending half the day down here it was finally time for the little guy to level up. With a glance at the status screen, it was apparent that an evolution was possible.

Name :

Ruby Wolf Puppy [ L 25 ] [ Ex - Max ]

Type :

Fire/Earth/Beast

HP

264/264

MP

210/210

SP

445/445

Strength

20

Agility

35

Dexterity

15

Vitality

18

Endurance

28

Intelligence

15

Willpower

15

Charisma

16

Luck

14

Roland could clearly see that Agni wasn't able to gain any more experience. From what the old gnome at the adventurer's guild had told him he needed to focus on this experience counter that was maxed out. After he did he could see multiple options become clear to him.

"Hm..."

He rubbed his chin while looking over them, it was time to make a decision or wait till his tamed monster leveled up his skills more.