

## Runesmith 187

### Chapter 187: Fast levels.

A magical bolt of energy flew through the air and connected with a face made of only bones. It was a direct hit on a tier 3 monster that didn't do much to evade it. It came flying from a small mechanical spider that had its metallic legs pressed into the rocks around it.

"I don't think I'll be able to kill this thing like that..."

Roland, who was controlling the spider golem, gave out a sigh after continuing to pelt it with mana arrows. Even though he could land direct hits on the monster's head, they weren't doing much damage.

The moment the monster's HP dropped below 80% it also started to regenerate its own hp through some skill. This self-regenerating effect wasn't that strong but it canceled out the golem's attacks in the process. It was clear that if he wanted to kill this creature he would either need to do it himself or utilize all of his golems.

'It does seem safe but it might also react to a living being differently than to a golem...'

While the test that he performed went well, he still wasn't sure if the monster wouldn't attack him. In theory, he should be safe but this didn't keep him from worrying. Now came the real test, one that involved him using an attack spell just like the golem did.

"Agni, stay here."

Roland used his remote control station to pull the golem out of the hole. The constant usage of mana arrows had also drained most of the golem's battery that needed to now be replaced. Thus the spider golem dislodged itself from the small hole that was made for it and returned to its creator.

For the time being Roland decided to replace the battery while also ordering the other golems to spread out around this area. While previously he only intended to run, now he might need a distraction if for some reason the monster burst through the rocky wall. The golems would only serve as more targets while he and Agni escaped into the secret passage.

Normally anyone would have a tough time approaching that hole with all the mines that he had placed there. Luckily there was a big advantage in being the creator of those runic mines and explosives.

Due to the extensive studying, he had to go through he figured out a couple of new tricks. One of them was to give the items that he created a sort of back door. Now with a small jolt of his own mana he could produce a sort of disabling effect when wearing his armor or having a sort of 'master key' item with a specific runic program on it.

Thanks to it he could disable all of the mines that he placed here. He could even put them on a timer or activate them when he was out of range. Thanks to this, none of his current creations would be able to harm him, as long as he was in possession of an item with the master key function.

'I'll disable them for the time being.'

It was time for the big test so he decided to disable the mines while slowly approaching the hole. He felt a bit silly for being so overly cautious but it was better to be safe than sorry.

'Would those guys be okay if something happened to me?'

A strange thought crawled into his mind as he was staring at the side profile of the Skeleton Champion. He thought to the people above ground, Elodia had recovered her deed to the orphanage but if he vanished Arthur would probably not help her if any of the merchants did something similar.

Bernir that was a half-dwarf and shunned by the dwarven population in the city would have a hard time finding work. His wife had also crossed the line after associating herself with Roland so they might have to leave the city altogether.

After opening the shop and becoming a business owner other people relied on him being there. While they would probably be able to find a place to stay, their lives would become difficult if he was gone. It was a strange feeling where people relied on him but he was not averse to this responsibility.

"You sure are an ugly one..."

He called out while looking through the hole. The monster didn't react which prompted him to walk a bit closer. It really couldn't hear or see him in anyway shape or form. It didn't seem that there would be a problem thus he brought out a magical staff. The design was quite rudimentary with a large mana stone as the focal point.

Agni that was watching from the distance quickly picked up on the stone's origin as it was fashioned from the previous boss monster's remains. The staff wrapped around this gem at the top. This was his first aether durasteel product that he had fashioned with his new smelter and forge.

'Here goes nothing...'

The monster on the other side started moving away, it seemed it was bored with getting its face pelted with mana arrows. This was great as if something went wrong the monster would need to turn around. Thus he took aim, the staff's shaft started glowing as the runes on it became more visible.

Infernal Skeleton Champion, it was an undead creature with a fire aspect to it. Normally undead monsters were susceptible to fire but resistant to the cold. These creatures were the exact opposite yet unless a person could generate enough cold energy to douse their flames they would continue to function.

Their biggest weakness was in holy energy but that element was exclusive to priest-type classes. They were the best class to bring along when fighting a large number of undead creatures.

While there were magical items that were able to produce divine magic, the assistance of a priest was needed. There was a peculiar manufacturing process for those types of weapons and armor which he had read up on during his learning phase.

The worst part about it was that such weapons needed to be constantly recharged by the same type of priest that lent their blessing. The only way to go around it would be to get some specific materials that had divine energy in them.

He considered paying his old acquaintance a visit but in retrospect, he didn't really know Sister Kassia that well. Whenever she spotted him walking around town she would try to shove the teachings of

Solaria down his throat. He was also unsure if he could trust her with his workshop where she would need to come to craft these special divine items.

Thus instead of going with any particular element, he decided to use the basics. A tier 2 frost lance would not be able to combat a tier 3 monster's flames. Instead, he decided to produce the strongest non-elemental spell that he could.

The staff continued to glow in a blue hue while forming a ball of light before it. This ball of light started spinning around and changing shape into a drill. This drill of pure blue mana continued to accelerate while producing a piercing sound which the monster on the other side could not hear.

This was no simple spell, it was more similar to the one he produced all those years ago against the ant queen. It was a combination spell that stored all of the mana energy at a single point while adding a spin to it. A massive amount of mana was being produced and also drained from Roland's reserves.

With a resounding boom, the spell in the shape of a drill flew forward and caused the dug-up opening to be widened in the process. The monster stopped in its tracks as the bolt of blue energy entered its dungeon but just like with the golem it was not fast in its reaction time.

The spiraling spell connected right with the monster's head. At first, Roland was surprised as the skeleton didn't just lose its head on the spot. The spell slowly drilled itself into that skeletal jaw before exploding. He could see the entire corridor where that flaming skeleton was standing shake and be covered in blue light.

The flash of azure subsided rather quickly and revealed a headless opponent that was just standing there. Roland could see the health bar getting lowered drastically as the monster clearly received a critical hit to its head. Regretfully this wasn't over, the undead creature could function without its head but would not be unable to see.

These types of skeletal enemies possessed something called a soul core. It looked like a flame of energy akin to a will-o'-wisp, with varying colors. This flame could be situated in various areas of the monster and in the lesser flaming skeletons, it was inside the skull.

This was also what Roland had hoped when targeting its flaming head. It seemed that this core was not there as the health bar only decreased by about a quarter. The monster was covered by heavy armor which made spotting the weak point even harder.

'Damn, it might be in the chest cavity...'

The second spot for this flaming core would be inside of the monster's ribs where the heart would be. The biggest problem with that was that this monster was wearing heavy armor but luck was still on his side. The enemy was now missing a head and after swinging wildly around itself it just stopped.

It was unable to detect where the attack came from, it could not detect where Roland was standing. Thus instead of running he just continued with another mana drill spell. With another charge up, the spinning projectile that was composed of pure mana energy rocketed towards its target and connected with another loud sound.

Roland wasn't sure what the armor was composed of but luckily it wasn't something resistant to mana. The spell met some resistance but continued to corkscrew its way inside of the monster's torso before vanishing into a burst of tiny mana particles.

The hole it produced wasn't that big but it was a beginning. Without having to worry about getting attacked he could just focus on attacking. The monster was quite resistant and he needed to pelt it with the enhanced runic spell over and over again. But finally, after downing down a mana potion, he saw the last bit of health of the monster shot down to zero.

**Infernal Skeleton Champion has been slain.**

**Congratulations you have leveled up!**

**Congratulations you have gained a new title!**

**Tier Breaker**

**Title**

**A title given to people that have managed to single-handedly slay an adversary that is a tier above them. When fighting against opponents of a higher tier the bearer of this title will receive a buff.**

The moment the monster hit the floor he was flooded with a myriad of system prompts. The first thing that he noticed was the title that he was given. He wasn't sure how large of a buff this was but perhaps it would alleviate this tiresome drain on his mana reserves. He was left sweating and with a headache after having to force himself to blast the monster repeatedly with a spell that went over his own limits.

Then there was his level that shot up to 123 just for slaying this one monster here. With this, he was reaching the limit of 125 at which he would need to change his class to progress further. 'The staff didn't break down... good...'

If he attempted to make this staff from deepsteel like his old wares, it would have certainly not been able to take the burden of this enhanced spell. Now on the other hand, after adding some special minerals to the mix, the new durasteel staff was still working fine. It had lasted through the test but he was already thinking of making some improvements on this grinding method.

The only reason that he decided to make this staff was its mobility. Without knowing how the monster inside would react he needed something light. Now he was positive that he could just pelt the monsters inside with a barrage of spells, he could bring something larger.

'It would be a shame to leave here only after killing one monster. Then, What should I do about the spoils?'

While the levels and title were nice, he stood before another question. What should he do with the dead skeleton? After receiving his last spell the monster along with its damaged armor was thrown against the wall. It was now close to the end of that corridor where there were probably other opponents lurking about.

There were some options here, first, he could just leave the damaged armor be and wait for another monster to appear. This would be the safest route to take where he wouldn't lose anything.

The second option would be to widen the hole between dungeons and quickly go inside to grab the monster's remains before they fade away. This would be the most dangerous decision as he didn't really know if there were any traps in that corridor or perhaps some hidden monsters that he couldn't see.

'Should I go with option three?'

He turned around to look at the spider golems that were on standby. The safest way of getting the loot would be to send the golems in. They could drag the monster's remains over to this chamber while he remained safe. After the monster was dead, its remains would be able to pass through the barrier between the two dungeons.

The golems had grappling hooks with nets that he designed against the boss monster. In theory, he could try shooting it from the safety of this chamber and then pull the monster's remnants in himself. This was probably the safest way to get to the loot while not risking his golemic creations in the process either.

There was one problem with this approach, he didn't think the net would be able to encase the dead monster that was down on the floor. It was designed to envelop a large target that was standing up. For it to work correctly he would need to use the remote control and probably have one of the drones go in.

'Is it worth it?'

Roland started calculating in his head. The monster's remains could be used by alchemists, they ground the bones into powder and turn them into various concoctions. Then there was the armor that was probably made from a good metal, while the chest part had been damaged the rest was in good shape.

Everything could be sold to make a sound profit that could go for more than the resources needed to build a spider golem. When adding everything up he decided to risk one of his creations.

First, the net was shot out by one of the other golems. Then he used the remote control to maneuver a second unit into the other higher tier dungeon. There the golem was used to shift the net in a more favorable position. For once luck was on his side as he was able to start pulling before anything on the other side could get closer.

The hole through which he was previously aiming had also increased in size after being pelted by multiple intense mana drills. Thus right before another monster appeared he was able to get the remains of the tier 3 monster out. The only part that was left behind was the head that was dislodged in the beginning.

"This is made from an alloy, it has some deepsteel in it but also durium and what's this... Resistium?"

With his current identification skills, he was somewhat able to read into the composition of this suit of armor. He was not able to figure out all components nor the distribution. Resistium was another metal that was seen as something between the tier 2 and tier 3 level. It's strength came in being able to absorb physical attacks.

It was quite lucky that the monster was wearing armor that was very resistant to physical attacks but not so much when it came to magical ones. Perhaps he had used up all his bad luck in his first ten years and now it was time for the renaissance of his life.

'Something is coming...'

While looking at the spoils he noticed a shadow moving in the distance. Another monster was coming his way and he was certainly intending to get to this level cap before getting out of this dungeon.

### **Chapter 188: Oh god, my eye!**

A high pitch whistling sound filled the cavern along with a blue glow. The light soon took form as it spiraled around in place to form a drill of azure. This energy construct quickly vanished from sight as it rocketed forward towards an ugly-looking monstrosity.

**Venomous High Ghoul has been slain.**

**Congratulations you have leveled up!**

**Congratulations you have leveled up!**

**The level limit has been reached, unable to gain more experience.**

**You have gained a new skill: Runic Eye of Truth**

Roland moved the still glowing magical staff to the side. It was producing a lot of smoke while looking somewhat used up. It was showing signs of runic erosion, the glowing symbols weren't as clear and the magical spell that he produced had diminished in power.

'I guess even Durasteel can't handle altered runes like this...'

The spell that he produced was probably something between a tier 2 and a tier 3 rank. It had enough power to kill off stationary targets like the ones inside this grinding spot but was inefficient. It required for the caster to fill it up with their mana for too long, thus causing the runes to deteriorate faster.

'That creature's regenerative skills were far too high...'

First, he came across the Infernal Skeleton Champion, then he also saw a lich but the monster that stayed in the corridor was this Ghoul. While Ghouls were seen as a lesser version of a more intelligent monster that was a Vampire, they were not weak. Some could even overpower their more conscious brethren in a fight.

They were undead creatures that could mend their own wounds in a matter of moments. With no other targets that he could choose from, he was left in a prolonged ranged battle where he slowly overwhelmed the creature with his runic magic.

This of course overloaded the weapon he created while also made him use up quite the amount of mana potions in the process. For the time being, it did its job but the next time he attempted this venture, he needed a change in weaponry that wouldn't drain him of his magical energy.

'Best if I leave this one be...'

The dead Ghoul was already decomposing into a pile of flesh. The moment it was dead and unable to regenerate itself its body started to break down. The only usable part would be the tier 3 mana stone it had but regretfully another monster had decided to stay in the room.

It was quite a surprising sight, it was the Lich type that showed some interest in its dead comrade. The monster did something that he didn't expect, it picked up the sparkling mana stone from the ground into its bony hand and then promptly ate it.

While Roland wasn't a specialist when it came to monster behavior he was sure that this was not something ordinary. The monster couldn't see him but even after eating that mana stone, it continued to stay in that corridor while staring in his direction.

After maxing out his level there was no reason for him to kill more tier 3 monsters other than farming their bodies for materials. The staff he made was still operational and he could always repair the runes but for the time being he decided to close the opening to the other dungeon. Instead he would use the rest of the time to gather up more of the ores.

Thus he placed some boulders in the opening to not have to see the ugly flaming skull of the Lich. With his new level also came a nice surprise, he had gained a new skill when his Runesmith Lord class had maxed out.

### **Runic Eye of Truth**

#### **Active Skill**

**Reveals the truth of the world to its user.**

'That's kind of vague, what is this truth? If it's the truth, why is this skill called the Runic Eye of Truth and not just Eye of Truth?'

He had many questions about this skill but the fastest way of discovering what it was about, was just to use it. As with all the skills that came before, there was a sort of implantation of knowledge the moment he received it. How he could activate it was known to him but what it did was another thing.

The spider droids were back at work and Agni was patrolling the area so he had time to test things out. Without much reservation, he decided to activate the skill. This time around he would learn an important lesson, not all skills were the same and some like this one had drawbacks.

First, the skill activated and he could feel a large chunk of his massive mana pool being drained in an instant. While he couldn't see it, his left eye began glowing as something appeared before him. This something were runic components and they were everywhere.

At first he was baffled by what he was seeing, the dungeon walls, the lava pool, even the air was covered in runic symbols. It was somewhat similar to the world of illusions that he witnessed all those years before but he was certainly not in an illusion.

Roland didn't get much time to figure out what this new skill was trying to show him. After a couple of seconds, his head felt like it was hit by a sledgehammer. He was burning up and the longer this skill was activated the blurrier his vision became, then just before he was about to pass out he managed to cancel the effect.

He dropped down to his knees while clutching the left side of his head. He could feel something dripping down from this side and when he pulled his hand away, there was blood. His left eye had suffered an injury and he was bleeding from it.

The pain was sharp and his vision blurry before him, without a second thought he moved his hand into his satchel to take out a greater potion of healing. With haste he poured it over his eyes while also drinking the rest. Thanks to his quick thinking the pain started to subside and his darkened vision also slowly returned to him.

“...”

“Awoo?”

“Ugh... my eye...”

Roland felt something moist touching his forehead which turned out to be Agni’s nose. He had collapsed on the ground and actually passed out for a few minutes which gave Agni a scare. His head was killing him and he felt like puking.

“I’m fine Agni, just give me a moment.”

Slowly he moved over to a larger rock that he could lean against. There he tried waiting it out, the piercing headache that he received didn’t subside even after he drank some mana restoring potions along with the healing ones. Only after half an hour did he find himself released from the sharp pain that felt like the worst migraine he ever had.

‘What the hell was that...’

Roland placed his palm over the left side of his face where the skill was activated. His eye was still pulsating but thankfully he could see through it. This was the first time something like this had happened to him. He heard of skills injuring their users but not by this much on the first try.

After calming down he thought back to the moment he activated the skill. The world seemed to shift into something different and most of the surroundings turned to runes.

‘Runic Eye of Truth... wait...’

He tried to figure out this new skill but his memory was somewhat hazy after the splitting headache occurred. But thanks to his high intelligence he was able to go back and remember.

‘Not everything was covered in runes...’

Agni was there not that far away and he did recall the ruby wolf moving into his line of sight. His wolf was not composed of runes while almost everything around him was.

‘Maybe it doesn’t work on living beings?’

After some time to deliberate, he came to a few conclusions. He wasn’t totally sure but considering that the dungeon was covered in runes could be attributed to its magical nature. That would somewhat explain why everything was composed of runic components. This eye skill was somehow translating everything into runic language but the strain on his eye was too massive for him to use it.

‘That could be the case, but I could also be wrong, perhaps the skill didn’t work on Agni because the level was too low?’

He wasn't sure what to make of it but after suffering through that sharp pain he wasn't too keen on activating it again. Perhaps if he left the dungeon and tried it out in a location devoid of mana and magic he wouldn't suffer that much of a backlash. Perhaps if there were fewer things in his range of vision he could alleviate some of the pain.

"Ugh..."

Finally, he decided to stand up but found it hard to keep his legs from shaking. Even with all his stats and a rather high level, the new skill put him through the wringer. For the time being, he decided to seal off this new ability as he clearly couldn't handle it yet. Perhaps he would need to increase his level to actually be able to stomach it.

It took him several hours to get a hold of himself, the potions that he had with him didn't do much to alleviate the sick feeling he experienced. There were still more ores to mine before he could leave. The spider drones continued to drill holes near the ore deposits as he decided to take it easy and just pick up what they mined out.

After venturing here once he had worked on the mining software of these golems. They were able to distinguish between the more worthwhile minerals now which made this expedition a bit more lucrative.

Thus he continued his work while feeling somewhat exhausted. Only after about a day was he back to his old self and working along with his golemic creations. With this being his second mining expedition he had managed to bag a bit more than previously while also minimizing the size of the more useless volcanic chunks of the dungeon.

His way back was uneventful, just like last time he waited for people to clear out while looking at his radar that he expanded as wide as he could. No bandits or robbers greeted him this time around, probably the people from the thieves guild would be more careful after one of theirs never returned that day.

When he returned home it was early in the morning. The mule golem slowly lumbered behind him as he entered his house. Even though he spent less time on this expedition he felt much more exhausted than last time. He wasn't sure if it was due to the new skill he used or the mana spent on blasting the tier 3 creatures.

There were two things on his mind, the first one was the new skill while the other one was his new class. Finally, he reached level 125 and his Runesmith Lord class had reached its maximum. Now he would finally be able to change it but to what he wasn't quite sure.

Before he attempted the change, he kind of wanted to test this new eye ability out. Perhaps he would need to for the coming class change. But for the time being, he decided to go to sleep, it was early morning and the shop was closed tomorrow so he could relax.

"..."

"Huh?"

Roland opened up his eyes to discover a familiar-looking ceiling. His body was bare and surrounded in water as he had fallen asleep in the bathtub yet again. After raising himself and wrapping a towel around his nether regions he noticed a note on the bathroom door.

'Please stop falling asleep in the bathroom, you'll catch a cold. I also left you some food in the runic cold box.'

It was a note from Elodia that apparently visited him when he was out cold. It was late at night and he had slept through the entire day. When outside he found some sandwiches in his refrigerator that he quickly devoured.

After a day's rest, he felt rather refreshed and ready for more work. First came the unloading of the mule golem, with more durium he would be able to create the golem for Arthur now. But before that, he also intended to attempt a class change. The only thing remaining would be to visit the Sun Church and get a few class change crystals, perhaps more than one if he finally did fail. Even if he had more, Bernir or Elodia could always use them instead as they were also slowly leveling up and reaching higher levels.

Before even attempting this change he decided to see what was up with this Runic Eye of Truth. If his theory was correct the best way to use it was in an environment devoid of magic or many magical items. For his testing ground, he decided to use an empty storage area that was recently built.

There wasn't anything in there for the time being and the walls were thick. Even though the walls were reinforced via magic they weren't constantly radiating mana like in the dungeon he visited.

After some preparations, he closed the door to this room while also placing down a wooden box. On this box was a small card which had one of the most basic spells on it, a mana bolt. If this skill was affected by the number of magical items and their grade, then choosing something on the lower spectrum would make it easier on his eye.

'I guess here goes nothing...'

To the side, he had some recovery potions, one of the bottles was already open so that he could pour it on his face if his eye started bleeding again. Then there was another tiny bottle that he instantly drank, it was a pain-numbing solution for just in case.

Besides the box and the card, there was a single chair on which Roland sat down. After going through the pain just a few days before he was really not keen on activating it again but he needed to know if he could use this skill in any way before moving on.

'Here goes nothing.'

With his mana being full he activated the skill once more. This time around the pain wasn't as bad as before. His eye started glowing while he focused on the runic spell scroll before him. Just as he had theorized if he didn't move around and just focused on a smaller point before him the skill was somewhat usable.

Even with that, his MP was dropping rapidly but he had enough time to see what the skill was doing. This time around the only object that was covered in runes was the spell scroll, the wooden box

remained just as it was. What the skill showed him was similar to what his debugging skill did but just in uniform color.

'Hm...'

Roland thought to himself while quickly canceling out this mana-hungry ability. While the first test was over, this wasn't over. If the skill was just a worse debugging skill then it would be something to laugh about. But he had an idea of what it could do to help him with future endeavors.

For the next test, he brought out a simple dagger. It looked old, the material it was made from was also not good. But this didn't matter, what mattered was that this was an enchanted item instead of a runic item. It was an old dagger one of the adventurers left behind after buying a superior one from his shop. Now it would be useful and show him if this skill could be used.

Thus as before he activated the skill while staring directly at the dagger. Then just as he had speculated, he saw it, instead of enchantments he saw runic structures. These structures he recognized as they were for the sharpness rune that he had runecrafting many times in his life.

'Hah...'

Just as his mana went below half he quickly deactivated the skill. While he would need to test the eyes on higher quality items, it was clear what this skill was really doing. It was somehow translating the magical language into runic.

But this wasn't over yet, one more test remained. There was another usage that this eye skill could have that he was itching to find out. Thus he quickly drank some mana potions while taking a small break. After two uses his eyes started getting slightly strained but he was able to continue.

"How did it go... ah yes... Source of all magic..."

He began chanting, it was time to cast a spell. Even now he felt a bit silly when uttering the chants but after seeing other mages do it, he somewhat got used to it.

A ball of blue light appeared in the middle of his palm as he finished casting. Then, quickly he activated the skill and to his surprise, he was also able to see them, runes. The ball of blue light had a runic structure that clearly was a direct translation of the same spell.

"Hah! It really works, I can use it like this!... Oh shit, it hurts."

His joyous outburst was short-lived as his left eye started burning up once more. He quickly canceled out the skill and doused his face with a healing potion along with the pain-numbing concoction. Even though his face hurt and he felt like puking, this discovery brought a smile to his face.