

Runesmith 293

Chapter 293: Angry and Worried.

"This looks terrible... Why are there so many holes in my workshop!"

"Wait until you go downstairs."

Bernir was clutching his head while looking at the workplace he had created for himself. It started as a shabby shack but turned into a full-fledged smithy through the years. Roland had seen him constantly work on it after finishing the workload, it was like his own project and place that belonged to him. Now it had been partially destroyed during the Lich's rampage, the chaotic mana had rained down and left large holes in the walls and the ceiling.

"Noo... my tools!"

Roland looked as Bernir rushed into the almost collapsed building. It wasn't in such bad shape considering that his home had a lot more holes and the front door was blown open. It would probably take a lot more to fix it and the wind turbines in the back.

"Most of the tools should be fine, they were made from deepsteel. I'll go check up on him so he doesn't get crushed under the ceiling."

Dyana was there too and she followed after her husband. Roland nodded as he looked inside and used some of his magic to reinforce the structure. He was not a carpenter or stonemason though so he didn't really have any skills that would help him identify the weak points. Luckily Bernir and his own student could use some abilities to help them out with everything.

"This might be a good opportunity to upgrade everything..."

While watching the large lady walk away he eyed the mostly wooden cottage that had once been his assistant's workshop. It started out as a wooden shed and had been constructed with that in mind. The resource used for it had been mostly wood and even though it was fantasy wood it still didn't have the resistance of the fantasy stones. Perhaps it was time to put some more money into all of this as his compound was certainly not able to last through a tier 3 monster invasion, even one was enough to cause this much damage.

'But perhaps I should prioritize leveling up first and leave this to Bernir instead? On the other hand, this all happened because I started rushing things...'

The Lich escaping from the dungeon was mostly his fault. While he had no way of knowing that his mana would affect the creature in such a way, it wasn't an excuse. If he went through the normal channels and adhered to the law then probably no one would have died for it. As it stood now, some adventurers had been killed by the monster and people's homes outside of the city were destroyed or ransacked by burglars.

Perhaps tossing himself into the exact same environment without thinking it over was a bad idea but on the other hand, he had already started this and at this point, there might not be anything he could do to stop it. Arthur had already heard about his plan and the platinum adventurers had already secured the dungeon entrance.

'It might be too late to stop any of this...'

In his hands he was holding his runic helmet, through it he was able to connect to Arthur via the instant message device he made for him. He was given the order to return to the city as there was a lot to discuss. Now with the city gates opened up, there was no reason to fear any more burglaries, at least not with his newly hired help.

"Wayland, weren't you supposed to leave for the city? Won't that pretty boy be angry with you otherwise?"

His eyes looked down at the small woman, her name was Senna. She and her party of four had decided to take the request of protecting his home. Orson, Dalrak, and even Grisalde was here.

"Yes, I'll be leaving soon, I just wanted to wait for Bernir to get here. I'll have to thank you for taking the request, most of the adventurers will probably be heading to the dungeon instead."

"Hah, they are idiots, going back into a dungeon a tier 3 Lich came from is dumb, its better to wait until that platinum party goes through it."

Senna shrugged while smirking as a larger team of adventurers was being formed to sweep through the dungeon. It was a dangerous mission but it also paid well, for some adventurers this was enough. The siege of the city was quite mild as the monsters never made it inside. The foolhardy people from the guild were probably bored out of their minds and saw this as a chance to let loose.

"It's not wrong for them to assume that this was a rare monster spawn, dungeon breaks don't happen often."

"That's why it's better to wait, no one knows when the next Lich will appear!"

"That is true, no use losing your life over some coin."

Roland nodded as he kind of agreed but also knew that no new rare monster spawns would be appearing anytime soon. He would probably need to find another Lich and shoot him with his mana cannon again for something like this to happen. Even after that, it could have just been a one-in-a-million chance that his mana resonated with this particular monster this well.

This all would require some testing which he could only safely go through after achieving his own tier 3 class. His current level was already at a hundred and sixty-six. The monster at the entrance didn't go over a hundred sixty. Taking this into account he should have been stronger than them when he achieved the new tier multiplied.

'It's not only the multiplier though, tier 3 classes also get those...'

"Wayland, are you leaving soon?"

Someone called out to him from afar, it was a voice that he knew well. Almost instantly a small smile crept on his face which the person he was conversing with noticed. He replied almost instantly while shouting a bit and Senna was quick to tease him about it.

"Ah yes, I got all that I needed."

"I see that your wife is here, I'll let you two lovebirds be then, and don't worry while you're gone we'll keep this place safe, just don't forget to give me a discount."

"Wait she's not my..."

"Haha, sure sure~"

Senna gave Roland a wink while moving away. The person that approached was a woman wearing glasses, behind her was a girl around the age of ten. It was Elodia and behind her was Marcie with some parchment. She was scribing something down on it while listening to her boss. Without peeking he assumed that she was making a list of things that needed to be either replaced or repaired. Luckily the store portion that was outside somehow made it out in one piece with the thieves not being able to get through the lock before Agni scared them away.

Elodia had come here along with Armand and Lobelia with both of the kids after it was safe. It didn't seem that anyone believed that any more monsters were coming, otherwise they would certainly not have taken the kids along with them. People in this world were certainly more resilient than in his old one where children were usually cuddled a lot more. Here on the other hand when they hit the age of ten and got their first class, they were expected to start pulling their own weight.

"Why is the city lord calling for you?"

"Well, I kind of made a few promises... don't worry, I'm at least good at making contracts, he can't force me to do anything unreasonable."

"That would be nice but alas your idea of unreasonable is a little different."

"Ah uh..."

Elodia's gaze felt like halogen lights trying to pierce through his forehead. She already knew that Roland was prone to putting himself in danger. This whole Lich debacle was already proof enough as any normal person would have just hidden away in the city.

"Well, at least most of the house survived, the shop is fine but what about the workshop?"

"Ah, wait for Bernir to look through it, the ceiling might need to be reinforced more..."

She turned around with her hands crossed over one another while pouting. Luckily he had decided to hide his hands behind some gloves the first time she arrived here. The healing potions did heal his broken bones but they weren't good at hiding scars. These health potions he used just boosted the natural regenerative capabilities of a body. He would have to get a costly holy elixir from the church or get healed if he wanted to hide the scarred tissue. This is what he was actually intending to do when he got to the city, this amount of damage would be feasible for a tier 2 priest.

"I'm uh... sorry?"

"Why would you be sorry? Not like you put yourself in unreasonable danger just to save some building and magical trinkets... come, Marcie. Wayland here has a lot of work to do, we wouldn't want to keep him from visiting the city lord."

"Uh..."

The young girl didn't know what was going on as she just nodded and quickly hid her face behind the piece of parchment she was scribbling on. It was clear that Elodia was quite mad this time around and he wasn't sure how to make it up to her. While walking away he did notice her almost peeking back but quickly turning around for another pouting session.

"She didn't get much sleep you know, Haven't seen big sis this worried since we had to leave that city..."

After Elodia left to tend to some things Lobelia appeared next.

"She slept near that crystal ball waiting for you to send a message."

"You don't need to add salt to the wound, I already feel like an idiot."

Roland had forgotten that he wasn't a one-man team anymore. There were people that actually cared about him and would be sad if anything happened to him. It was an actual nice feeling for once but it also brought some drama into the mix. At this moment he didn't know what he could do to ease Elodia's mind.

Perhaps they needed to have a heartfelt talk if this whole relationship wanted to continue as he couldn't see himself becoming less prone to injury until at least getting that tier 3 class problem sorted out. Even after that, it was only the first step beyond the wall. Not like tier 4 class holders didn't exist and could bully him around. Both sides would probably need to agree to some type of compromise but that was something for later, first he needed to actually see if Arthur worked things out with the platinum adventurers.

"Good, you should... but anyway, you don't need to worry about those three fools. They were working on their own. The guild won't come after you or anything like that and they also didn't have any connections so that's that."

"At least some good news for once."

"Well, have fun but be sure to be nice to my sister, or else!"

Lobelia delivered a hefty smack to Roland's back that didn't really make him budge at all. She was all smiles but her words would be taken seriously. Now that everything here was getting taken care of it was time to move to the city. His magical half-plate armor that he used for walking in Albrook was already on him so after one last attempt at a wave toward Elodia and getting a side glare he decided to leave her alone for now.

"I miss using my bike..."

The runic bicycle that he had made previously was stashed away in his workshop. After making the tunnel to the dungeon and also having someone else to carry his wares to the city he didn't really have a use for it. His attention turned towards more complicated magical machines like the runic golems. This didn't mean that this mode of transportation couldn't revolutionize the city.

'If I manage to get a few wind turbines into the city and create some charging stations, it wouldn't be impossible.'

This idea wasn't his own but came from his old world. Their electrical cars and bikes were just becoming more mainstream. It would take some work and help from the city but it wouldn't be impossible to

popularize magical bicycles. All he needed to do was place a runic battery onto his current design. He couldn't expect regular citizens to have enough mana to power them or use mana fluid as a fuel source.

That resource was more costly than gasoline in his old world. On the other hand, his renewable runic batteries were different, they could be recharged multiple times. The only thing holding them back was the materials they were made from. With time the runic structures would deteriorate the metal and would need to be replaced or repaired. Something like this would be too much for him as he could not replace hundreds of runic batteries just like that.

'I'd need a factory or something to make them... perhaps if I could get a golem to make them or repair them instead...'

This was the only way besides hiring other runesmiths to do the work instead. An assembly line to produce batteries and a smelter take back the resources used on the old ones. When thinking about recycling he also thought back to his new skill that he recently tested out. It was the Basic Machinery Salvage skill that he gained after getting past level forty with his runic engineer class.

The test he performed on the mangled-up runic golems that were melted by either the Lich or the explosion. First of all, it required a large amount of mana but considering his current level it wasn't that straining. The test was easy, he just placed the mangled-up blob of metal on a workbench and activated the skill.

This caused the whole piece to glow in an orange light and progressively to get smaller. It was actually a very game-like skill as in the end what was left was an ingot along with a few screws and bolts. The skill skipped the whole smelting process and could salvage whole ingots from destroyed golems and other basic parts like screws.

The only downside was the mass, the ingot, and parts that were left behind consisted of a lot less than he started with. If he went through the usual smelting process he would be able to gain back more. However, this skill made things a lot faster and it was still only at its lowest level. Perhaps at higher levels, it would be able to produce more. Then also when he applied more mana he would gain better results that at this time seemed a bit randomized.

While walking through the forest he filled his boring head with potential future plans. There were many ways of making money and now even more if he could get Arthur on board with it. The manufacturing of runic bikes or even other car-like vehicles could only happen with his help and it could be a potential gold mine. This however could only happen if the product could reach a wide enough clientele.

As things stood now only rich merchants and nobles could afford things like those. In his mind, the more people he could reach the faster his business would grow. The market for luxury magical items was almost fully saturated, to gain some ground he might have to look outside the box and target people in the middle that weren't quite rich but not poor either.

The thoughts of expanding his business were interrupted by all the various people scattered around the place. After the monster Lich was defeated a lot of tier 2 monster bones were left everywhere. These could also be picked up by the commoners, seeing farmers and ladies from shops here was certainly a new experience. Thanks to soldiers patrolling these areas now they were safe from being bullied by some of the less stellar adventurers.

'Even one bone could go for a full month's wage so this isn't surprising... but I'm not sure if Arthur won't have his soldiers confiscate everything at the entrance gate.'

He wasn't sure if they didn't read the memo but these bones were supposed to cover the expenses of the main wall repair. Perhaps some of these people were trying to smuggle in some of the smaller bones in hopes of selling them in another city or a merchant that was fine with going against the order.

'There will always be people out there trying to gain the system, well not like I'm any better.'

Roland was reminded that this whole fiasco started because he wanted to keep the adventurers guild and the dwarves out of the mining spot that he found. Now he would need to live with the consequences of his actions which might show their ugly head at any point in time.

'I should speed up, those platinum adventurers probably don't like to be kept waiting.'

Thus he sped up towards the main road that would get him to the city where perhaps a new headache waited.

Chapter 294: On with the scheme.

'They do work fast here, just a day ago they were fighting for their lives and now it's like nothing happened at all.'

Roland had to give it to the people living in this world. They quickly recovered after the potential life-ending incident and were back to their daily lives. However, he wasn't sure if it was because of their nerves of steel or just because otherwise they would starve. The nobles didn't usually offer any aid to the commoners, if they stopped working their money would quickly vanish and so would their food.

'It's not that they are brave but they don't have any other choice.'

Guards were everywhere but they didn't look that mindful of monster attacks, probably the adventurers that he saw outside were patrolling for monsters instead. There were a lot of people going out of the main gate but not that many inside. However, a line was forming as the soldiers were frisking people for monster bones. Just as he expected, some kind of agreement was made between the city and adventurers as they were actually giving small amounts of coin to people with skeletal bones on them.

'I guess they'll buy them for a smaller price and sell them later for a profit, sounds like something the Guild Master came up with.'

His turrets just like he expected were melted down due to someone overusing and ignoring their specs. He would need to perhaps make a written manual while also improving on the design further. This just meant more work for him but at least they had taken a lot of skeletons down with them. Perhaps they had no value for prolonged sieges but they could be used to push the initial enemy advance.

'With a Runesmith included in the defense they would be able to last through a lot longer, perhaps a more modular design would be better if the operators won't follow the instructions?'

While thinking of a different turret design that would allow certain parts to be replaced on the fly he heard someone calling out to him.

"Hey you, stop!"

“Hm?”

“Hey what are you doing?”

“Huh?”

“Please go through sir, forgive him he is new here.”

“Ah alright...”

Roland without thinking about it much just attempted to cut in line. One of the soldiers that looked quite young started shouting his way but was instantly stopped by a gate guard that he recognized. While walking past the two he could hear the older guard reprimanding the new one about it.

“Are you stupid or something? That’s the city lord’s runesmith. Do you want us to get a pay cut or something? Or even worse, if he brought it up with the Lord you could lose your head!”

The older guard made a head-slicing motion with his thumb and followed it up with quite a good impression of a head being torn apart. The younger soldier recoiled in fear as his face got pale.

“That is? I’m sorry, I didn’t know.”

After receiving a couple of smacks to his head the young soldier ran off to the main line while Roland continued on his way. He could see that people were looking at him with more interest than usual. He had told Arthur to keep him out of the rumors but perhaps making a trap strong enough to kill a Lich was enough to earn the people's favor. Some of them whispered while others bowed in respect slightly while he passed.

‘If this was a game, would my approval rating with the city have risen to favorable or something?’

He wasn’t sure if he liked this, his face was somewhat exposed as he wasn’t wearing his helmet but just covering it with a dark robe. When he came here a few years ago he wanted to lay low and just live a simple life of a craftsman. Involving himself with the nobles and being sent to war to fight was something he wanted to avoid.

With his current array of skills, he would probably be safe from that fate as making good weapons was usually more important than becoming a soldier. The situation at the borders was finicky with small skirmishes breaking out every so often. It was like a powder keg waiting to explode, each kingdom and empire was eager to gain more lands and power. Getting involved with that world was a given if he remained in the Arden estate and it was still a possibility if his father actually found his new residence.

‘He hasn’t found me for over ten years now so he probably won’t ever unless Robert talks.’

Too much time had passed since his disappearance and it was more than likely that everyone had come to terms that he was dead. That is with the exception of one person which was his youngest sister who was apparently getting some oracle-like dreams from time to time.

‘But even an Oracles has limits, as long as I keep away from the royalist territories she shouldn’t be able to tell that I’m here, at least not until she gets to tier 3 perhaps? But perhaps I should stop worrying about things I have no control over, I can only prepare and minimize the damage when the time comes.’

In reality, Roland's fears of his family had mellowed out substantially, even one of his brothers knew about his location, and nothing ever happened. It wouldn't be strange if his Father knew about his location already and just chose to ignore his existence entirely. The old man felt quite distant, perhaps having one bastard out of the way just made things easier for him as Roland's current status as a Runesmith gave him little value as a prospect. Without a knight class that was considered noble and just, there wouldn't be any marriage partners that were willing.

'Marriage huh...'

One way of making himself truly undesirable in the noble world would be to take a common woman as his first wife. When going by the traditions of this world, this choice was the most important one of them all. No noble lady of status would be willing to be a second wife of a husband with a common first, it was something none were willing to stomach.

There was already one person in his mind but considering that he was putting himself in constant danger he didn't want to take the plunge down that road. Then there was the fact that he was practically already in one as many kids were wandering around his compound while he was also sharing the bed with the woman taking care of them.

Bringing more of them under his roof would just be a new headache, thus he wanted to still wait a bit more. The age of his new body was quite low and with his vitality stat constantly increasing his longevity was becoming enhanced. It wouldn't be strange for him to remain at the appearance of an early twenty-year-old even when he arrived into his mid-thirties like this. This was kind of what happened to humans that leveled up fast, reaching the tier 3 class would only enhance this effect further.

Stray thoughts continued to enter his mind while he headed towards a secondary location, the Church of Solaria. Before moving to Arthurs's estate he needed to get his hands checked by one of the priests. Luckily the person he was most familiar with here was there, Sister Kassia.

"May the Lady bless you on your journey."

"Thank you."

It was a mostly uneventful encounter as there weren't that many people that were injured during the siege. The only noteworthy event was when one of the tier 3 monsters flew inside the city. However, the guild master made quick work of the skeletal gargoyle before it could even injure anyone else.

Though Roland did use this opportunity to activate his runic eye and get a better feel on the divine spell Sister Kassia was using. His hands were cured as he expected and now he would be even able to show them to Elodai when he returned. His research concerning these spells was close to a breakthrough and with his higher level, his eyes weren't even hurting that much when he was examining this radiant effect.

Soon he continued on his way and finally arrived at the Valerian Villa. At first glance, it was clear that a lot fewer men were guarding it. Some of them were probably patrolling the city or outside of it to see if it was really safe. This didn't stop them from letting people out, everyone was free to go outside and had to decide for themselves if it was worth the risk.

Things like shelters didn't really exist and some people actually had to beg for temporary stay in other people's houses. This whole siege was a good wake-up call for the missing infrastructure that this city required. To not have a similar mess happen like in the city attacked by the cultists Arthur would need to think about updating everything and perhaps Roland would be part of this enhancement plan. Being able to produce golems and turrets for protection was already something that had proven its worth.

"Master Runesmith, the Lord is awaiting you please come in."

'Master Runesmith?'

A guard dressed in armor that he had enhanced with his runes called out to him. To the side, he also spotted a sword with one of his runes that he could detect through his senses. With his current skills, he could even activate this rune to produce the effect it was created for. This would somewhat make escaping from Arthur's soldiers rather easy if he was ever betrayed in the future.

'Is my new position in this estate that decent or are they just nice to the man that made their magical equipment?'

He wasn't sure what Arthur told everyone here just yet but at least he was being respected by the average soldiers. While high-born knights and nobles didn't see blacksmiths as just common craftsmen, the soldiers usually gave them more respect. They knew well that their life depended on the quality of gear they were using and they didn't want to antagonize the person that made them.

'This place sure is changing fast, before Arthur came along this was nothing more than a big house.'

The previous mayor that lived here didn't really have any funds to expand this manor. After Arthur appeared it had to be enhanced as it would look bad for a person from the Valerian household to live in something that was considered small. Now they had high walls around it and from what he heard there were plans of expansion to the back.

'If this was before I discovered that other dungeon I'd say that building a castle would be impossible, but after it gets out that one is here the money will roll in.'

They were actually sitting on a gold mine here, a potential B-rank dungeon was just this sought-after. It could even be something greater than an A-rank dungeon or just a better connection to the S-rank dungeon that even to this day was giving everyone a headache.

'The only problem is... that we don't have a good foundation here yet.'

This was the part that was the most concerning. Arthur lacked any tier 3 knights and his personal bodyguard was probably weaker than Roland himself. While the Valerian Patriarch would probably not make a move this wasn't the same for his sons. They could see this as a chance, what could their bastard little brother even do if they sent a few goons after him?

They would probably attempt to turn him into a puppet and funnel all the gold that was gained here into their own ventures. If he didn't want to cooperate? Then perhaps they would even try doing something more drastic. Roland had already seen what a succession battle could do to people in Edelgard. There the ruling noble decided to kill all the prominent merchants just to get ahead.

'Though those Platinum adventurers could be Arthur's way out, that is if they agree to work with him.'

It wasn't strange for powerful adventurers to retire and work for nobles instead of being stuck in dangerous dungeons. It wasn't such a bad deal for them as they would have access to tier 3 creatures here already. Those tier 3 skeletons that were at the entrance would go for quite the penny and as first adapters, they would have a chance to earn big.

Every adventurer that stayed in the business knew that the first loot received in a dungeon would always be better than anything that comes after it. This was a somewhat loose rule but there existed a higher chance of rare items dropping from the boss' chest during the first clear. It was as if this game-like world didn't allow easy rare item farming. With the monsters being around levels hundred fifty and sixty the boss monster would be a little tougher. If they managed to clear out that area then they were looking at a lot more money than they could ever have hoped for from a simple Lich subjugation.

"Please wait here."

Roland was led into a room without anyone in it and told to wait by one of the maids. Everyone that he was acquainted with was missing, Gareth, Morien, and Mary were nowhere to be seen. They all must have been gathered with their lord and perhaps were conversing with the adventurers. Ferdinand, who was the mayor before Arthur arrived, was the only one he recognized but he was conversing with some of the serving staff and vanished quickly into another room.

'This reminds me a bit of the old home...'

The room that he was sitting in looked to have been recently outfitted into a waiting room. It wasn't too lush but it certainly was something that would be used by a noble and somewhat similar to the old rooms in the Arden estate. In the distance, he saw some random paintings of people that he didn't recognize but they seemed to be of noble birth, probably either current or old members of the Valerian family.

It was a rather boring experience as he was forced to wait here with nothing much to do. From time to time a maid would show up to give him a refill on his tea and some sweet treats that he ignored for now. When asking about Arthur he was informed that the lord was in an important meeting and would ask for him when the time came. This of course happened but around two and a half hours later after his arrival.

'Maybe I should stop coming early.'

"The lord is awaiting your presence, please follow me, Master Wayland."

Roland even in his previous life was the type of person to always arrive early. This was something that not everyone followed and many times he would be left waiting. Ever since arriving in this world, he had tried to keep up with his old habit. Thus he felt that whenever his time was wasted he was being looked down on but after arriving at the new room he realized what the reason for all this waiting was.

"Oh, isn't that the gentleman from the other day? My, my you do look a lot better without that shiny helmet."

It was Myrtle the cryomancer along with one other member of her party, the sun elf archer. They were sitting on one side of a table on a white sofa with Arthur and the guild master on the opposite side. Mary was standing next to the tray with tea while the two knights were guarding the entrance to this

room. It was now clear to him that they were discussing the issue with the dungeon and it seemed that they were now finished.

“Ah, I see that you have already met Master Wayland.”

“Not bad but he doesn’t have the charm of a proper Sun Elf.”

“Oh, you.”

The woman laughed at Aubron that eyed Roland’s facial features before deciding that he was still superior to the human smith. He wanted to ask what this was all about before advancing but luckily Arthur was quick on the uptake.

“I will make this short then, in three days' time Master Wayland will guide you to the area we discussed, there you will establish an encampment and finally delve into the dungeon to measure the threat level, just as we discussed.”

‘Three days?’

Roland had not really agreed on a timeframe for preparing his tools and everything. He was yet again thrown a curveball and couldn’t see himself sleeping too well for the next three days. Yet he didn’t want to complain as this was still a great chance for everyone gathered here. The Platinum Adventurers were willing and there were five of them. With this amount of manpower, they would certainly breeze through the dungeon.

“Excellent, then we will see Master Wayland in three days.”

The Platinum Party leader smiled brightly while looking at Wayland before standing up from her seat. It seemed that his presence wasn’t really needed and that he had probably wasted a big chunk of the day on getting here. However, while the two excused themselves the guild master and Arthur remained in the room.

“I heard that you proposed this plan, Wayland, I must commend you on your craftiness brat.”

Aurdhan laughed while also standing up.

“I’ll make sure that everything goes smoothly on my end, my lord~”

In a flash he was gone and before Arthur could say a word Mary’s voice exploded from the back.

“Who does that baldy think he is? Lord Arthur, we should lock him up in a damp dungeon!”

“Ha ha, calm down Mary, he is now an important business partner and so are those adventurers, you’ll have to work with him for the time being.”

Mary’s face went a bit red with anger but she didn’t say anything back to her lord. Roland on the other hand just stepped a bit further as he also needed to be filled in on the status of the plan. It seemed that he would need to create an entrance into the dungeon that wouldn’t look out of place and luckily after glancing into the other dungeon he knew how it should look.

‘Three days will still be a bit rough though... I might need some outside help and I’m missing a forge. Wait, perhaps I can use that place instead!’

