

## Runesmith 295

### Chapter 295: Working long hours again.

“So this is it?”

“We’ll have to make do with it, without a proper forge we won’t be able to create the parts that easily and it’s easier to modify this one than to make a new one from scratch.

“Aye, so Boss, have you decided on what we will be making?”

“Yeah, a very thick double door.”

“A double door huh? Does the City Lord need one for his home or something?”

“I guess that could be a good excuse for now but ...”

Roland and Bernir had arrived at what looked to be a fully functional smithy. It did not belong to the dwarven union and was created for the city lord instead. Their location was in one of the guard towers' upper floors. This area was intended for Roland or another blacksmith that only performed tasks for Arthur. Now that he had officially taken up that spot this was kind of his working area. While the tools were inferior to the ones he had back home it was a proper workshop that they could use.

“There is more to it?”

“Yeah, listen up, this can’t be known by anyone, we could get into trouble if the union finds out.”

Bernir wasn’t sure what this was all about as he only got asked to get his butt over here for some work. Working on a large gate or door wasn’t anything special after creating many working weapons and armor, this wouldn’t really be much of a workout for either of them. Nevertheless, his mouth opened wide after he realized that the true reason for them making the door was to bring it into the dungeon.

“There is another dungeon inside the dungeon?”

“Yes, but never speak about it to anyone, not even your wife, the fewer people know about this the better.”

“Uh... sure.”

Even though Roland was inclined to trust Dyana with things like this, there were ways of making people talk with the help of potions or magic. Even if she didn’t want to, she might have not had a choice in the matter. The only reason that Bernir was finding out about it was that he was needed for this short expedition. Both of them needed to discuss the thing between them and a dwarf’s insight about dungeon walls would be much appreciated.

“I’ve already prepared the blueprint, I was thinking about something like this but first I need to tell you about the spot it has to go...”

It wasn’t really a problem to design a door for the dungeon. He had already seen several of them inside of it and just mimicked the design to be somewhat similar. It would be a simple thick double-sided door that opened to the inside of the mine. Normally he would have liked it to be the reverse as it was always harder to break down a door that opened outwardly.

However, there was a chance of the dungeon walls pushing in from the sides and blocking the way forward. If the door was aligned in such a way it could get easily blocked by the dungeon rocks. Roland continued to explain everything to Bernir without leaving out the fact that this door would be shoved between two dungeons.

“So this is what it’s all about...”

It didn’t take long for his assistant to put one and one together. He instantly knew what was happening here and his confused face started grinning.

“Hehe, I knew about the mining area but didn’t know there was a B-rank dungeon down there, no wonder the city lord is trying to keep everything under wraps!”

While Bernir never really asked about what Roland was doing down there in the dungeon, the increase in rare minerals and metals was obvious. Now that he knew about the secret dungeon entrance and that they would be creating a large door to go through it, he was ecstatic.

“Haha, those fools! They would never get to do something as exhilarating as this!”

Roland smiled faintly as he saw the passionate gaze in Bernir’s eyes. It was clear that he was a proper craftsman that saw this as a chance to further his craft. Not many people were fortunate enough to create projects like this. They needed to make the entrance look like something that belonged in a dungeon.

Luckily for them, it wasn’t strange for entrances that were made from new materials to appear in a dungeon. These magical underground locations were constantly expanding and created everything via a type of creation magic. It was quite random and even if it was obvious that the door was created recently it wouldn’t give their ploy away.

“I’m glad that you are full of vigor but we have to complete this in less than three days.”

“L-less than three days?”

“Yeah, we need to get the dimensions right and make sure that we can assemble the parts inside of the dungeon as the whole door will never fit into our spatial bag, so don’t expect to sleep much.”

“Aye...”

Bernir’s drive was reduced slightly when he heard that they had to prepare everything within around seventy hours. While the parts in themselves didn’t need that much handling they all needed to be bulky and thick. They needed to cover the whole length of the dungeon walls which complicated things.

“Let’s get to work.”

All the materials that he could muster from his broken-down workshop had been carried over here. The rest had been procured by Arthur and his people which was hard as they didn’t really want the dwarven union dwarves to know what they were up to. It would be hard for them to figure out what they were doing after getting a list of required parts.

“I’ll tend to this smelter, haven’t used one of these in years... Think I’ve been spoiled by all the runic equipment, hehe.”

Bernir chuckled while getting ready to melt some materials. Of course, Roland would speed things up with all of his magic and perhaps this would destroy some of the tools that were here. Thus the two got to work, the sounds of hammers hitting metal echoed through the tower but no one was able to go see what was happening. News of soldiers guarding the new runsmith workshop reached the ears of the competition but they would not find out what had happened even when they tried later.

...

"You are late."

"No, we are not."

Roland gave out a sigh while looking at the group of five adventurers that he was supposed to accompany into the dungeon. They had arrived about five minutes late which was already a demerit in his mind. However, he couldn't pinpoint the reason for them being late but it probably had something to do with the stench of alcohol the two dwarves were giving out.

The two reminded him of the meeting with Arthur three days ago. There he was 'informed' about the three-day deadline he needed to prepare all the tools for this new expedition. This already put him in a bad mood but then he was also reminded of the union dwarves that knew about the mine. Just as he expected they wanted immediate access to it but were denied by Arthur.

For the time being, they were forced to wait but there was no way of telling what they would do. It was not probable that they would follow them into the dungeon at the moment and the Guild Master gave out an order to close down the dungeon until the Platinum Party goes through it. This gave him some time to erase his tracks but luckily the dungeon mostly did that for him.

The only potential thing that could give him away was the sensors he left in the walls to further his mapping device. Even if those were discovered, there would not be any repercussions. With Arthur's backing and even the guild master on his side, even if someone found the runic devices he would have a good excuse. Everything that he did was ordered by his new partners in crime, having the magical tools in the walls to create a map was not against the law, it was actually a good way to earn money that he would get to after the entrance was created.

"You have to forgive my friends, they always take their time to tour a new city."

Hermond the shield dwarf and Delmond the one with a large polearm yawned while producing fumes that even reached his nose. It was clear that the two were partying in the red-light district. Myrtle was the one that apologized for her comrades which was quite surprising. Normally it was hard to see people at this high level acting like regular people usually, they liked to throw their weight around.

"But I thought we would be going with six people, who is that young man behind you."

"This is Bernir, he is part of my business, I need his help with a few things during the trip, don't worry he can take care of himself, and don't worry, we can trust him."

The five adventurers looked at the half-dwarf with mild interest. Myrtle was more interested in the strange weapon that was strapped to his side. It was covered in some hidden runes and radiating a faint mana signature. On his back, he was wearing a large spatial backpack and was the replacement for

Roland's golem that had been blown up in the dungeon. There was just not enough to create a new one instead, Bernir would get to be a porter like in the good old days that he wished to forget.

"Don't worry, my lips are sealed."

Bernir moved both his thumb and index finger to his mouth to perform a zipper-locking motion. While he sounded chipper his eyes were telling a different story. Due to Roland's pace, he did not get much sleep for the past two days and now they all needed to get through the dungeon and then assemble the heavy-duty door.

"Well then, shall we?"

The group of adventurers and two craftsmen gathered outside of the dungeon. There they met with another small group of people. Some of them Roland knew well while others were ones he only knew from a distance. The one that he was most familiar with moved over to greet him almost instantly with as always a shit-eating grin plastered all over his face.

"You're here Wayland! You sure took your time but I've also heard that you've been having trouble with the missus."

"I don't know what you're talking about."

"Common, you can't hide it from me."

Roland felt an elbow lodge itself into his side. The moment it did he wanted to do nothing more than smack the person that it belonged to.

"Armand, leave him alone and focus on the dungeon, we might be just the extra party but you never know what could happen there."

The duo of Lobelia and Armand had arrived a bit before them and had spent some time clearing out the easy monsters at the entrance. They weren't allowed to get too far as they were acting more as a scouting party. Their job was to make this trip faster by defeating any trash monsters that got in their way. The platinum party on the other hand would conserve their strength for when a powerful tier 3 monster appeared.

This way of doing things wasn't anything special, it was one of the bonuses of being a tier 3 adventurer. Sometimes they would have nothing to do and be hired just to act if a high-level monster appeared. Considering that Roland wasn't expecting any of them to appear they would probably not have much to do until they reached the secret chamber.

Thus the expedition was officially started. On the outside, it looked to be there to make sure that the dungeon was safe but a few people knew what it was really about. Just as Roland expected, the monsters from the first all the way to the tenth floor had managed to respawn. They didn't pose much of a problem for the group of high-level tier 2 adventurers. While Armand and his group took care of them the platinum party followed behind him at a slow pace. For them, this part was nothing more than a boring walk with nothing to do even the boss at the last level went down in a matter of moments.

"I don't see any skeletons, do you?"

"No, I can't feel any strong monsters either."

Lobelia and another tracker he wasn't that familiar with asked each other about the situation in the lower area. There was nothing of substance there, the skeletal monsters had all died when their master was defeated and the ones that they met on the upper levels were just the flaming skeleton variant that could be defeated by a tier 1 class holder.

"I guess that's it, our job is done Wayland, have fun."

"Nice, I like easy jobs like this, more time to have fun, see you later Wayland!"

Armand smirked while walking back into the boss's chamber. This group was only there to take care of the trash mobs. They were not there to look at the secret entrance to the mine, Arthur still wanted to keep that location secret. The fewer people knew about the way to enter it, the better it was for them.

This also brought another problem to the forefront as no one besides a runesmith or a rune mage would be able to open the hidden entrance without forcing their way through it. As it stood now there wasn't really another way to get to the mine than through the passage in the lake of lava. The alternative entrance would require quite the steep climb down into a gorge and inserting steps into it wouldn't be possible with how monster worms could be triggered at any time and destroy it.

"So this is it? Doesn't look like anything special, the monsters are really weak."

Aubron commented while looking around the open space covered with lava. In the distance, he spotted the usual monsters like tier 2 salamanders and volcanic golems. The man looked bored and everyone in his party looked like they were above places like this. Considering that they were probably all around forty years of age and had been in the business for twenty years or so, it wasn't strange.

Places like this were a giant waste of time, the experience they could gain was nonexistent and time was precious. Monsters were usually stronger than their human counterparts. One of the reasons was that it was a lot harder to gain a proper battle class at tier 3. Monsters were also exempt from having to take class change trials that sometimes could set someone back months or even years.

"In what direction is that secret passage?"

"We need to go in that direction, past those lava geysers in the distance."

Roland answered the sun elf that was for some reason taking out his bow. There was some ground to cover but if they continued at this pace then they should arrive at the mining area within a day's time.

"What is that golden-haired elf doing, Boss?"

"I'm not sure?"

Bernir caught up to the party as he was the slowest of the group. When he got there he could see a very serious-looking Aubron glancing into the distance while holding his bow. He had one silver arrow notched in which drew in both his and Roland's eyes. However before the two craftsmen could identify what materials it was made from, the arrow flew out.

At first, it was a confusing sight, the projectile made a nice arc while going for the head of a salamander monster. Why would the archer decide to shoot at one of these trash mobs instead of just walking past them? However, after the arrow connected with the creature's head, it all started. Instead of colliding with the ground after the kill the arrow somehow bent upwards and continued to its next target.

'This isn't magic... is it a skill or ability?'

There were magical archer classes but the man here didn't have one of them. This made it clear that this was either due to some kind of skill or perhaps the weapon he was using. Without feeling any unique mana pattern during the release of that shot Roland had to assume it was some kind of class ability.

The arrow continued to zoom around the whole area hitting monsters on their weak spots. When against a salamander it went for the head but when a volcanic golem appeared it moved toward the core instead. Then the most surprising effect of them all was that it was somehow gaining momentum with each kill as if it was absorbing the energy of its victims to fuel the carnage.

"That should be all, let's go."

The blood-covered arrow returned to its master that caught it with his hand. Aubron nonchalantly placed it back into his quiver before walking forward as if nothing happened. The rest of the group just ignored the spectacle as if it was something that they saw every day. The only one with his jaw wide open was Bernir who was left speechless.

'It would be good to not anger these people..'

Roland tapped Bernir on the shoulder to bring him back to reality. It would be better to get this mission done and then go home. It made him uncomfortable to spend time around five people that were probably on the same level as the Lich he barely defeated by exposing its only weak point.

### **Chapter 296: Drilling through.**

"Hey, I think we can actually sell this thing."

"It won't be much but it's better than nothing."

A large man that took the shape of a beast was looking down at a large defeated monster that looked like a T-rex. Roland wasn't part of the subjugation but remembered a time when this foe had almost killed him a few years ago. The man that defeated him was the druid that had transformed into some kind of mix of bear and person. He had just overpowered the monster to the point of Roland feeling bad for it, the one-sided battle ended under thirty seconds.

The beast was now down on the ground with a ripped-out throat that was torn by Braum's clawed hands. The person Braum was talking to was Aubron the sun elf. The two for a moment looked at the body and then turned their gazes toward the porter of the group, Bernir.

"Huh? Me?"

Bernir was confused at what was happening but quickly realized what they were trying to imply. Before this could get out of hand Roland needed to put his foot down. Both of them were not here as their porters and Bernir was his assistant.

"Excuse me but we are not here to carry around your luggage, if you wish to take these monster's parts with you, you'll have to dismantle it yourself."

"Dismantle, what a very Runesmith thing to say, don't worry Master Wayland, my companions were a bit rude."

“Hey Myrtle, wait a second...”

“Now now, Aubron we did not come here for these, just take what is in the chest and let's go, if what the noble said was correct then there will be many tier 3 monsters for us in the other dungeon, conserve your strength, we don't know what awaits us.”

“Hm... fine then...”

The other party members looked at each other and just shrugged. There was no apology towards Bernir or Roland as they just waited for him to show them the way forward. Myrtle was right considering that she did not know if a tier 3 monster could be lurking at the end. They were assured that they didn't need to worry about this part of the journey but as the team leader she needed to take into account that things could go wrong.

Soon the group continued into the hidden chamber that opened up the corridor leading to the hidden mine. Each time he interacted with the runes to open up these passages the woman kept her eyes and senses focused. It was clear that she was trying to find out the way of opening up these paths but unless she became a rune mage or a runesmith she would be unable to. At least not with the conventional means that Roland was going with.

‘I'll have to make some kind of remote for these entrances, I can't guide each adventurer party there by myself every time.’

His secret was out and probably soon the other hidden entrances would be discovered. It wouldn't be hard to create a magical device to open these pathways as he had already figured them out. It would only require him to send a signal to trigger the mechanism. This brought another problem to the forefront, however.

People will know that entrances behind runic magic existed, and they would probably go around searching for them. He might have been the only runesmith in town but this didn't mean that there weren't other options. Some of them were runic gadgets made by other runesmiths that were capable of detecting such hidden entrances. Now that they were discovered some people might bite the bullet and start investing in them.

There was also a possibility of discovering these through other magical means. While runic language was peculiar it wasn't undetectable by other means. Faint traces of mana could be spotted by some people or monsters and it was also possible to brute force openings through the dungeon walls. He had been drilling holes for a while and there was a bunch of dwarves with mining skills ready to attack these potential gold mines.

‘But perhaps this won't be such a bad thing, I won't have to hide when going through the shortcuts, it's already a miracle that no one had noticed me going in and out of the lava pool already. It also won't happen immediately but I wouldn't be surprised if someone figured things out after the mining area is opened.’

Roland's ploy had somewhat worked out in the end. While he had unleashed an angry Lich on the dungeon he had somehow come on top of this whole fiasco. The only downside was his now closer engagement with Arthur Valerian. He had become his official Runesmith and perhaps something more.

There were a few clauses in the contract that he needed to agree to otherwise, his life could have been in jeopardy.

That is if nothing happened to him on this half-assed expedition that Arthur and he thought up. It was a good thing that the Platinum adventurers were in on it but he would have hoped to have a few weeks to prepare before going into the belly of the beast again. Roland still wasn't sure why his mana resonated with that Lich monster in that way. Luckily his job was not to go into the dungeon but just to install the door and then later the encampment together with Bernir.

"We are here."

"Oh... this is really interesting..."

Myrtle's eyes opened wide as she saw the shiny crystals illuminating the inside of the large cavern. The whole place was also radiating mana thanks to all the various Elokin's crystals that were stuck to the walls. As a mage with a high degree of mana sense, she could tell the worth of this fuel.

"Such a mine really existed here, maybe we should have bartered more before signing that contract..."

"You think so? I told you that this was fishy! We should have taken a percentage instead of a flat rate."

"Perhaps but... we couldn't have known that it would be this big, I expected a tiny mine with some marginal materials, but..."

The archer and the mage seemed to be the brains of the party. They started bickering a bit after arriving here. Roland wasn't there during the contract signing but after the comments, he was sure that Arthur had managed to not give them a percentage of the sold loot. No one could have really known what this delve into the dungeon would unearth.

It seemed that the Platinum adventurers were more concerned about minimizing their current losses than looking into the future. If they had known, they would have probably taken part of the monthly earnings of this mine as a reward instead, but perhaps Arthur would have dismissed something like that.

'While getting this place under wraps is important, giving away so much money wouldn't be wise. There are probably more platinum adventurers out there than places like this.'

"Let's hope this dungeon is worth it, Runesmith, get to work!"

Roland nodded at the sun elf that was less and less cordial with him. For the time being, he would need to stomach the behavior as he was in no position to complain. Thus both he and Bernir moved in to set up the temporary encampment while the usual lone salamander was one shot by the archer's arrow.

"How about we rest for the night, we spent many hours getting here and it will take some time to create an opening."

"You want to take a break?"

"Hm, why not? I could use a drink."

"Aye, we agree!"

Aubron was quickly voted down four to one as the two warrior dwarves and the druid wanted to instead drink some alcohol and eat. Their party leader was still a mage type so her stamina wasn't up to par with the others. Bernir wasn't quite there yet, luckily his physique had improved due to all that smithing work he did, this didn't mean he was good at carrying heavy objects for so long. From everyone here, he was the one most affected by the heat and had to stick close to Roland that utilized a chilling spell.

"Hah, feels like we went back in time, the way the adventurers treat you like you owe them something is still the same."

"I guess even veterans see porters this way."

Bernir and Roland made their way to a separate spot while the team of five started going through the mining area. The two reminisced together about the good old days, for a moment the two went into the dungeon together and had their little adventures. Later on, Bernir became a full-time smith while Roland moonlighted between two jobs to keep his business afloat.

"... but we should get a move on, how about you start with the tents and I'll get the mining gear?"

"Sure thing Boss."

The two got a few minutes of rest before getting back to work. The tents that Bernir tended to were the same ones that he used during the expedition that ended in this mining area. If nobles and knights could spend days in them then they were good enough for a platinum adventurer party. Even though they acted important they weren't as bad as actual nobles. Going through many tiring adventures had made them resistant and they would probably be able to sleep on these rocks on the ground if they had to.

There wasn't much to do here in this space and only one tunnel leading to the chasm which the adventurers checked out. The time that they spent exploring was used by both Roland and Bernir to set up the encampment. What remained from his mining tools were the magical ones that he used to tunnel through the upper tunnel from his home into the dungeon. The large drill he pulled out of the spatial bag made Myrtle look over as she just couldn't keep her eyes off the quirky designs he produced.

'She really likes to look doesn't she?'

Roland could feel the woman's piercing gaze on his back. Even when they were traveling through the upper levels he could feel her glancing at the armor he was wearing. He didn't have that much experience with people with magical classes but she reminded him of Lucille De Vere who was also an ice mage. Considering he was only working with tier 2 runes he couldn't really offer anything that interesting for a tier 3 mage. The gear he could make for the group would be inferior to the ones that they were wearing.

'I guess there is nothing else to do here though.'

The tents were soon set up and the five adventurers split two between each other while Bernir and Roland got the smallest one to themselves. That is after their job was finished as while the fighters rested the two started drilling a hole in the wall. First came a rough outline that was a bit smaller than what the door would be. The measurements were crucial and it was always easier to shave off a bit at the end than to wait for the dungeon to regenerate itself.

Roland only had one heavy-duty runic drill that was operational. He connected it to his runic armor which helped him control the speed and intensity. Bernir on the other hand was left with a regular pickaxe that he had some skills with. most of the time he just helped with moving away the loose rocks and dirt that was produced in the drilling. Luckily the wall wasn't that thick and within a few hours, the opening started showing itself.

'This would be a lot faster if I had some golems... I think we also need to get those guys in motion, never tried making the opening this big.'

"Ms. Myrtle, I think you should get ready, we are through."

"Hoh, there really is something on the other side."

"Yeah, it's really a tier 3 monster and it really can't see us at all."

A head-sized hole was made through which the group could peek through. Instantly on the other side, they could see a skeletal monster wandering about. Bernir was quite shocked when he first saw one of the large skeletons. It was quite different from the ones that were on the upper floors.

"Boss, is it really safe?"

"Yes, don't worry as you can see they can't see us on the other side, take a look."

<table border="1">

### **Infernal Skeleton Guardian L 157**

;

What they were looking at was a lot bigger than the Lich that he faced. It was a monster that was as large as one of those black skeletal minions. Its bones were even thicker and in its left hand, it was lugging around a massive tower shield that looked like a door. For a moment the monster reacted to some of the rubble coming to that part of the dungeon but was now retiring. That is before it got hit in the back of its head with a rock that was thrown by Roland.

"Hey what are you doing, Runesmith?"

"Calm down and look..."

Aubron was a bit shaken by the unexpected throw that Roland performed and was quick to notch an arrow into his bow. The rest of his party also moved forward as if they expected the monster to charge through this wall. The only one that remained there without averting her gaze from the monster was their party leader.

"Fascinating, it really can't see us and it is already turning around as if the rock never hit it to begin with."

"I'm not sure what Lord Arthur explained but even when we uncover this wall here, the monsters won't see us nor will they attack unless something crosses through the threshold."

"I thought that noble was full of shit...hey Aubron, can you do it?"

“Huh? Who do you take me for Braum?, of course, I can do it.”

Roland wanted to get back to work while this group just stood guard over them. Aubron had another idea though as he raised his weapon and used the previously notched arrow to take aim. A strange glow appeared on the tip that was certainly not made up of mana particles. It was some kind of different energy that this class had access to. Roland wanted to inspect it with his runic eye but with the woman mage around, he didn't want to show off too much as he was convinced that she would have noticed something.

Both Bernir and Roland backed away from the hole right before the attack went off. A strange high pitch noise escaped from the arrow before it turned into a slither of silver light and flew through the hole. The monster on the other side was in the process of turning around and even though it noticed that something appeared from behind it was not able to react in time.

The arrow connected with the monster's head which instantly shattered. Right from the start, it was clear that this archer's attack was a lot faster than his mana cannon and the power was a lot more concentrated. To his surprise, the monster's large shield fell right after and probably if he was part of that party he would have received a prompt that the monster had been slain. It only took one precise hit from this tier 3 archer to defeat a monster like this.

While it wasn't ready Aubron had hit its weak point that this time around had been in its head. When these undead creatures were considered these monster cores tended to pop in random locations. They were mostly inside of the rib cage or in the head, either he had been lucky or he used some type of skill to pinpoint it.

“See?”

“That was a lucky shot and you know it.”

“Lucky shot my ass, hey Runesmith hurry up and make this hole wider, I need to go get my arrow.”

The arrow that delivered the finishing blow had traveled all the way to the intersection leading out of this chamber. It actually burrowed itself quite deep into the rocks that Roland previously had trouble leaving a dent in. This was a true tier 3 party and it seemed that they would be able to clear out this dungeon. While the order was somewhat disrespectful he ignored it and nodded, with these people around he felt that even if a group of those high-level undead charged out, they would be able to handle them.

Thus the drilling continued and in around thirty minutes there was enough space for a person to make it through. The group didn't wait for it to be enlarged even further and to Roland's surprise, they all started going into the dungeon on the other side. He could see that there was something in their eyes. It was either the call for adventure and exploration or just greed, he wasn't sure but the group was really motivated.

“Haha, it's time to get rich!”

“Aye, let's go!”

“Continue with the good work Master Runesmith, we will see you later.”

“Ah... do be careful, I have no idea what lies beyond that corner.”

If he could he would like to peek around but the door had to be shoved in place first. He would like the group to wait before continuing but not as they would listen to him. As he saw the backs of them disappearing into the corner he could only hope that they wouldn't overdo it and get themselves killed before this venture could prosper.