

## Runesmith 43

### [Chapter 43 More smithing.](#)

“You were a blacksmith? But ... aren’t you a mage? Why would you, did I get the wrong house?”

Helci was standing in front of Roland and her mouth was moving fast. She had examined the inside of this workshop and was now barraging him with questions. She had picked up this quest as a side job. She was back to doing the transport missions with her old party and taking a safer approach to the whole adventurer life.

This left time for her to pick up part-time work like this. She didn’t expect to find the poker-faced mage she adventured around a few months ago here though. Even less that he was now apparently a blacksmith.

“Well no, I switched recently...”

“But you were so strong back there, aren’t you wasting away in this dump? You should be fighting monsters!”

Thanks to how many ants they slew, Helci had leveled up to a second tier 1 class. She had taken the hunter class that boosted better tracking and bow use. It was also a class that was good with short swords and would let her level up to a ranger class on the tier 2 change.

“Didn’t you have enough fighting monsters? Thought you’d slow down after the way that Grotto mission went.”

Roland replied with another question. He’d thought that the girl would see some reason and relax. However, she was as active as always. Adventuring was the thing she wanted to do, this raised another question though.

“Shouldn’t you have left for a city with a dungeon by now?”

The girl flinched slightly and let her head down. She then looked back up to Roland while blushing. Her left and right index fingers were now poking against each other while looking at her old party comrade.

“I... I don’t have enough money to make the trip...”

Roland raised his brow and took a glance at what Helci was wearing. She indeed had some higher tier gear. Her sword seemed to be enchanted in some way and the clothes were spanking new. The armor she was wearing was hard leather and she might have had some more goodies hidden in her spatial bag.

“So even if you wanted you don’t have enough for the train ride? Can’t you just take an escort mission to a city with a dungeon?”

Roland asked while placing some smithing tools on his workbench.

“You think it’s that easy? Maybe if my stupid party wanted to move with me!”

She slumped on one of the chairs while sighing and then started talking. Roland certainly didn’t think that he would be having such a heart to heart talk with his new assistant.

Helci told him that due to the lack of funds it was hard to move. She wouldn't have much left for an inn and she would need to find a new party. She was someone that just switched to her second tier 1 class and considered a newbie. She might not be able to find a party that wouldn't rip her off if she moved.

There was also the problem that a city with a dungeon wasn't anywhere close to where Edelgard was. Roland was making a lot of money by crafting his scrolls but a new steel grade adventurer wasn't. After the failed mission the guild only rewarded them partially as there was no proof that the client lied about the ants being there.

Helci spent most of her hard-earned cash on her new equipment and recovery potions and was not left with much besides that. She was a scout and a hunter so she also had the added cost of arrows. The costs added and she was left with living from paycheck to paycheck. The paycheck being whatever she got from the adventurer guild.

It would take her some time until she gathered enough to travel. After going through the mine experience and then spending most of her coins she did some thinking. She now knew that she got overzealous with her expenditure. This time around she needed to gather enough money to have a fallback plan. This was also why she was now here, earning more as an errand girl.

To Roland, this didn't explain why he was getting the girl as an assistant. He thought he would get someone that at least had some basic smithing knowledge. Would this girl even be able to identify the crafting materials he ordered her to get?

"I see... you should be careful with your money in the future. You can start working by cleaning the office then."

Roland had to stay and listen to the girl complain for fifteen minutes about her adventurer party. He didn't have the whole day for something like this, he needed to craft more items and train his smithing skills.

"Slave driver!"

The orange-haired girl shouted at him before grabbing an empty bucket to fetch some water. She wasn't someone with high strength but with the added levels she was stronger than your average human man that didn't have a class.

Roland didn't need her for anything else at the moment. It felt kind of strange to have someone follow his orders around. Was this how all the business owners felt when they ordered their workers?

The girl vanished behind the warehouse doors after going out, the well for the water was about five minutes from this spot. While she was gone Roland decided to turn on the forge and get started, today he would craft a utility knife. He was also in the possession of a lesser sharpness rune which would go with it nicely. That is if he managed to compress the rune enough to fit the small knife.

He would be making the knife out of some leftover tools that weren't usable. He would be making it from a rusty horse hoof rasp, which was used for filing down horse hoofs. Half of it was rusted and he just needed about eight inches of the handle part. It was already broken in half so he wouldn't need to cut it. It was also made from steel and not iron this time around.

First, he needed to heat it up to a nice red color. He then began hammering the handle end of the file over the near side of his anvil until it was half an inch wide. By using the handle end of the file he would save himself a lot of time on forging.

He made sure to knock back the sharp corners where the file handle began to create a taper; this prevented cold shuts from forming. He then drew out the handle taper until it was long enough.

Drawing and tapering to lengthen thin steel were the most common techniques a crafter would use as a blacksmith. When you drew steel out, you used flat hammer blows to make a section of steel uniformly thinner and longer.

Tapering used angled hammer blows, often with the piece of metal held at an angle to the face of the anvil, to narrow a section of metal on an angle.

So he drew out the blade of the file until it was slightly over an inch wide at the shoulder of the handle. He then created a one-sided taper by holding the spine of the knife flat on the anvil and while holding his hammer at an angle.

Roland bent the handle over the horn of the anvil in the middle and brought the tip completely around. He did it so that it was flat against the spine side with a loop at the end.

He then started to grind the blade evenly on both sides until it was just right. He couldn't grind it too thin before hardening; otherwise, it might have become brittle and crack in the process of making. Next came the process of Annealing.

To normalize or anneal steel, was to slowly cool it after forging to let the steel or metal grain structure relax and refine. This reduced the chances that the steel would shatter when it is hardened. For the basic blacksmith, normalizing meant to slowly cool the steel near the fire, while annealing meant to very slowly cool the steel in an insulating material such as ash.

So he continued by annealing the knife, he heated it up first so that it would become nonmagnetic and then he let it cool in a bucket of ash. After annealing it, he heated it back up to a nonmagnetic state again just to then quench the blade in oil.

Following this, he tempered the blade after repolishing the edges. He did this by holding the blade upside down and waiting until the blade showed a straw yellow color and then he quenched it again.

A yellow color was the hardest temper, used for cutting tools such as wood-carving chisels and slicing knives such as this. It was best used for anything that needed a hard, strong edge at the expense of a higher chance of chipping or cracking.

He was now mostly done with his creation. He just needed to add the rune part and then polish it. Maybe add a wooden or cloth handle so he wouldn't need to hold it by the cold steel. The steel would make runecrafting more difficult but he had leveled up this skill thanks to the skill book.

While he was examining his creation he noticed someone standing next to him. He jumped back as Helci had her face shoved right next to him as she watched him working.

"W-what are you doing?"

“Nothing, finished cleaning that room but you were busy working so I didn’t want to disturb you. You really are a blacksmith, aren’t you... also here have one...”

Roland looked at the smaller girl, in her hand was a ripe red apple. He looked at her then back to her hand before taking the apple. He realized that he was actually a bit hungry after having forged this knife for the first time.

“Um, thank you.”

“No problem, just part of the job! Also...”

The girl paused while Roland took a bite out of the apple, some sweat running down his forehead.

“Are you good at forging arrows?”

She asked while glancing at him with her large eyes as if she was expecting something.

“Arrows? Haven’t tried yet... shouldn’t be too hard, just need a steel or iron rod. You can probably buy the arrow shafts at the woodworker so I’d just need to make the arrowheads. Not sure if you can get the quills there though...”

He talked out loud while thinking that practicing on arrowheads could be better than making nails. He might be also able to inscribe some lesser runes on them.

“Arrow shafts and quills... okay... I’ll be right back.”

Roland eyed Helci that looked awfully happy for some reason. He had her as a temporary assistant for now, it was probably a good thing that it was a person that he knew. The girl was a bit off but he could probably trust her, she was a good kid.

The only problem with having an assistant was that he couldn’t runecraft. He was still trying to hide his prestige class from others. He was far too young to be a proper runesmith so intelligent people would probably put two and two together.

While Helci was out he went back to working on his utility knife. It wouldn’t work well as a weapon, it was too short for that. He mostly made it to train his smithing skills and then to train his rune inscribing.

He had one of those grinding wheels to help him do the sharpening. It was even one of those that he could operate with his foot and not with a handle. He gave it a spin and sharpened his newly produced tool and then gave it a nice polish.

Crude Steel Utility Knife [ intermediate ]

His skills increased a bit so he managed to finally get an intermediate ranking. The more he worked on something the easier it became. He also knew that the smithing skills were somehow helping him out. He didn’t even need to concentrate that much while shaping tools that he previously made. His body would shift into automatic gear and recreate what he already did. The more his skills went up the higher the rating on the items became.

While Roland was happy about his new creation his assistant showed up again. She was holding ten wooden sticks that looked like arrow shafts and quills. She placed the items that she brought on the table and looked to her new kid boss with a smile on her face.

“Here you go, I saw some iron bars here so I didn’t get those. Now you can make some arrowheads! Leave the quills to your lovely assistant!”

The girl nodded and started attaching the quills to the premade arrow shafts. The procedure wouldn’t really be hard as everything was already prepared for her. The girl was really chipper about him making some arrowheads and he already realized why.

“They probably won’t be that good...”

He took one of the wooden arrow shafts that Helci graciously brought over. He aligned it with some of the thinner iron rods that he had in the smithy and picked one that was the closest in thickness. Luckily he had a point mandrel that was close enough in width.

This was just a pointy tool that allowed making consistent sockets for arrowheads. It was about six inches in length and when he aligned it with the arrow shaft it looked to fit the size nicely. He wouldn’t need to grind it down any further thanks to this.

The forge was activated again and the piece of iron was placed inside to heat up. He left it there till it glowed a bright orange similar to when he was working with the nails. He took the hot piece of metal to the anvil and started hammering the heated end.

He was aiming for a rough spoon shape that was a little bit over three times as wide as the rest of the iron rod. He made sure to flatten it out nicely and to taper the ends thin. He then started folding the socket by placing it over the horn and hammering gently.

After folding it a bit he placed it back on the face of the anvil and started to gently round it out. He made sure to not overdo it otherwise it could collapse onto itself or have sharp creases. After it was nicely rounded out he grabbed the point mandrel from the side and inserted it into the created socket.

He then proceeded to hammer it in so that the inside would fit the wooden arrow shaft later on. He needed to hammer it a few times from the sides so that it fit the tool better before it was done. He then used his hardy tool that was meant for cutting to cut away the partially done arrowhead from the iron stock.

He grabbed his pliers from the side and grabbed the soon to be arrowhead with them by the socket side. He placed it back on the anvil and started to draw the arrowhead out into a four-sided point. After he was done he inserted the point mandrel back into the socket and did some finishing touches on the arrowhead.

If he had a better grindstone he could skip some of the hammerings to the tip and just sharpen it with it instead. It wasn’t fast enough for such a thing and he could only add some sharp edges instead. After about twenty minutes he was mostly done with it and it was actually quite pointy at the end.

After he used the grindstone to get rid of some uneven parts he heated up the arrowhead once more. This was just so he could place it into some oil. This was too cool it off and give it a nice oxide finish to keep the point from rusting. He handed the finished arrowhead to his lovely assistant and told her to

use some sandpaper on the inside of the socket and then to attach it to the arrow shaft while he worked on the rest.

He had nine to go and the more he worked the faster he could finish. His high dexterity allowed him to better work with smaller parts like this and he didn't fail even once. It took him about three hours to finish these up, in the end, he had six low and four intermediate iron bodkin arrowheads.

He was actually happy with his work, the only problem was that these wouldn't sell for all that much and he would probably earn more by scribing more scrolls in the night.

"Here... you can take them, just pay me for the iron..."

Helci grinned widely after Roland gave the arrows to her for close to nothing. He knew what she was planning but he didn't really care. He just used this as practice, if he ever made a runic version of the arrow he would charge her normally.

"You're the best boss in the whole wide world! Don't worry, I'll be sure to cook you some good food, I bet you've been only eating out in those cheap restaurants."

She wasn't wrong, Roland mostly just went to the closest place in the neighborhood and didn't even care if the food was bland. He even received a nicely cooked stew for his work that almost brought a smile on his face.

So his life as a blacksmith continued, his levels were rising slowly but he knew that if he continued he would finally be able to craft something special.

#### [Chapter 44 'Borrowing' runes.](#)

Days went by and Roland continued to practice his craft. He created regular tools most of the day which he then melted down for crafting materials. They were far too crude to sell and any responsible blacksmith made his or her own tools.

With the help of his temporary assistant, he didn't need to go to restaurants every day. She would cook and clean and he would help her out by crafting arrow shafts. With this, his smithing masteries were increasing at a steady pace. This only left his level that was increasing at a snail's pace.

'Even runecrafting doesn't give me that much experience...'

Roland gave out a sigh while hammering another one of his creations. He was making a door handle for his new workshop as the old one had fallen off. He could have just repaired it but he would be given fewer points.

He was just adding the finishing touches by bending each side of the handle on the horn of his anvil. After it was finished he just needed to attach the new iron handle via nails to the wooden door. The door didn't have a lock, just a simple latch that he could use to close it from one side.

His Basic Forging and Basic Smithing Mastery were at level 4. They were leveling up fast if you compared it to his blacksmiths level that was only 3 after all this time. The books weren't joking around when they said that taking a third tier 1 class would be a headache. If he continued like this he would max out all of his basic crafting skills before he even reached level 10 with his runic blacksmith class.

This was something that he expected would happen sooner or later. It felt like a big waste of time though. He would be stuck with skills that couldn't be upgraded even if he continued working hard. It might have been even better to level up other skills that he ignored after that happened, like his stealth, running or weapon proficiencies. With the added Blacksmith strength and endurance he would be able to handle some heavier weapons.

Before that happened though there was one thing he wanted to do. That was to draw as many rune schematics as humanly possible. He had bought all of the runic scrolls that were in the city already. There weren't that many of them, to begin with as most runesmiths would rather hammer red hot iron than hold a quill in a dark room.

This left him with not much to work with. Only some basic elemental spells like the arrow series. There were also some situational ones like the lesser shadow veil and the life detection spell.

He needed to get more armor and weapon-related spells like the impact rune or detonation rune he received. The problem was that even the cheapest piece of armor cost at least a few small gold coins. He didn't have enough gold to go around and buy enchanted armor to level up.

One option was to buy an enchanted sword with a popular rune. Learn how to craft it himself thanks to his debugging skill. Then order some swords and add the rune to it. This would probably be one of the better options and he could ask the gnome manager to sell his items without people knowing that it was him.

The only downside was that runecrafting still sucked him dry of mana, he probably wouldn't be able to make that many weapons. Also he would need to stop making his scrolls due to not having any mana left after.

There was something he could do before that, something that in theory would allow him to get rune schematics free of charge. The problem with that was, that it was probably illegal and if he got caught he might go to jail. Getting caught was improbable, mostly due to the nature of the task he would be performing.

'I should give it a try... I need to test it out in the field...'

Roland rubbed his chin before hammering the door handle into place. The one he made even looked better than the old one which showed him that he was really improving his craft. His assistant was out on adventures for a few days so he had some free time to do some tests.

The next day came around and Roland left his workshop. He couldn't test his new idea in one of Exeor shops as the stores weren't in the business of selling magic swords. They mostly sold materials, scrolls, and alchemy products.

He needed to find himself a shop that had a relation with an actual runesmith. These were weapon shops and armor shops and they looked very similar to the ones a person could find in games.

After some walking, he was now in front of one. It was one of the bigger shops in the city and there were already some adventurers inside looking over the items. The person that owned this was a runesmith that took the weapon smith path.

Getting a runesmith class was quite hard and he already knew this. Most of them would specialize in only one of the fields, either armors or weapons. The effort they would need to put to level up both would be astronomical. Still, some people like that existed and they were the true grandmasters of the craft.

The shop was named 'Balmyr's Weapons' and it had a sword and ax symbol by the entrance. He was wearing his usual robe and covered most of his face as he didn't want to be spotted.

The part of the store the regular customers were allowed to walk on was on the first floor. On this floor, you had various weapons of the regular variety. They were mostly made of steel or iron and you could even pick them up and examine them.

The second floor wasn't accessible for just everyone. You had to be a silver grade adventurer or have some connections. On that floor, the more pricey enchanted weapons that were from the common grade and above were placed. Due to how much they cost they were well protected and you had to jump through some hoops to even examine them.

He wasn't here for those though, no. He walked over to where some of the rune enchanted items were, the ones with lesser runes. There were a lot of them around behind glass cases, a person just needed to call over one of the clerks to examine it or to purchase it. He on the other hand just wanted to examine them through the glass.

He moved closer to one of those display cases. He saw some steel swords there, all of them were looking better than what he was able to produce.

'Steel Axe of lesser sharpness...'

'Steel Dagger of lesser sharpness...'

He started looking through them, most of them had the sharpness enchantment on it as it was one of the more popular ones. He needed to find an item with a rune that he didn't yet know and it didn't take him long to find one.

'Steel longsword of lesser scorching...there we go...'

Roland murmured to himself. That was one rune that he wasn't familiar with just yet. From his knowledge, he knew that this enchantment would imbue the weapon with flames. The flames wouldn't harm the weapon or the user. The magical fire would add a bit more damage to a person's attack but it wasn't all that great as some people might think.

He moved in closer as now was the time to carry out his dubious plan. He moved over to the glass case and was lucky enough that no one was close by. He carried out his plan by sticking his face as close to the glass as possible and then staring at the sword.

Yes, he just came here to stare at the weapons. His debugging skill was activated and he could see the runic spell structure of the lesser scorching rune.

He wouldn't be sketching a diagram here though, no. He was using one of his traits, mainly the Knowledge Retention one that he was blessed with. His memory wasn't perfect but he figured to give this a try.

He already knew the runic structures after scribing so many schematics and spell scrolls. He didn't even need to remember all of the magical pathways. The most important thing were the separate components. He already knew the ones that were used for fire and flames. This lesser scorching rune had similar elements as the fire spells he was used to scribing.

He remained there for ten minutes just staring at the sword. Some of the workers gave him side glances as they didn't know what this person was doing. He had his head squished into the glass and was intently looking at one of the swords.

Roland finally pulled his face away and quickly ran out of the store. This left the clerks even more surprised, the sword was there so there was no stealing involved. The youth ran back to his workshop with haste and grabbed his paper and pencil. He quickly started drawing everything down. Within fifteen minutes he had all of the components on the paper and only the traces remained. With the help of the drawing skill, he didn't even need a ruler to draw a straight line so he finished up everything within half an hour.

You have created the schematic for the Lesser Scorch Rune [ Low ]

He gained some experience for creating the schematic. It wasn't of the highest rating as he had made some mistakes here and there but it was a working lesser scorching rune. With his debugging skill, he could easily increase it to the highest grade.

Roland sat down while looking at the paper he just drew the schematic on and chuckled. He had just managed to 'borrow' a yet unknown rune diagram for himself. He saved himself some small gold coins thanks to this and it didn't seem that anyone noticed.

He wanted to run back to that store and do it again. He knew that if he went through with that someone could notice. He now had a way to get some free rune schematics but he couldn't overdo it. He was scared that someone would notice him using an unknown skill and if he went to jail they would have ways to identify it.

'Yeah, no need to be hasty...'

Roland thought to himself. He was still stuck in this city for some years, he could slowly go to the weapon and armor shops and 'examine' the wares. If he did it once or twice a week no one should be any wiser.

He couldn't do it again now so he decided to move forward with one of his experiments. He would try making a bronze age sword.

He would be using some premade items that he had bought previously. One of them was the mold box that went together with special sand that would go into it. The other thing he needed was a wooden replica of the sword he would be molding. Luckily he had done this strenuous task previously.

He had gotten himself a piece of wood that was more or less a thicker plank. He first drew the shape of the sword on it. Roland went for a leaf-shaped sword design that would be on the shorter side. After drawing the shape on the wood he had cut it into the rough shape then filed it down to perfection.

Now he just had to insert the sand into the mold along with the wooden sword replica. So he did and luckily it left a nice sword imprint. He now needed to carve out a channel for the bronze to go in that was at the handle part.

This wasn't the first time he was doing this as he had some practice with the paddle magic wands. This would take a lot more time though as after the casting there would be a lot of grinding and polishing left to do.

The mold that was in a wooden holder and had some latches on it to close it together. He also hammered in some nails to keep it tightly shut. The smelter was already running hot and the bronze was already in it. He wasn't doing his own mix of adding tin to copper as he just got some working materials from another store.

After everything was nicely melted he took out the melting crucible with the heated metal and began pouring it into the small opening of the mold. Smoke started coming out but luckily he didn't see anything spilling outside. The top of the wooden mold began catching on fire after it was filled up but that wasn't a problem.

The casting process was now over and after the mold had cooled off it was time to open it. The latches and nails were removed and the inside was revealed. A very rough looking piece of bronze covered in some sand was seen by him. After cleaning it up from the sand the dreaded grinding process would begin. This would probably take him over a day to finish.

Roland continued, his grinding stone and sandpaper were used. Luckily there was sandpaper in this world otherwise this would take even longer. It was impossible to polish the blade without any blemishes as the casting process in the mold just wasn't good enough.

On the next day, he managed to get done with polishing and it was time to attach a wooden handle. He used the base wooden sword replica to draw out a handle on two smaller blocks of wood. He then used some tools to shave it down to size, attaching it to the sword would be done with rivets.

Bronze Leaf Shaped Sword [ Intermediate ]

He looked at the shiny sword, he had polished the surface and he could very vaguely see his reflection in it. There were some scratches of the surface of the blade shaft from the sandpaper and grindstone left behind. If he wanted to get a highest rating he would probably need to have a blade with no blemishes.

This was enough, it was nice and sharp and was now ready for the runecrafting process. He grabbed a better steel hammer from the side. He still needed to get himself one that was at least made from dark steel in the future. There were even special ones with enchantments that boosted a smiths mana control. Though they cost an arm and a leg as other runesmiths were unwilling to hand over good crafting tools to the competition.

He pushed his magical energy into the hammer handle. It traveled upwards into the head and then went towards the face. It started glowing in blue light and crackled slightly the moment he delivered a blow to his bronze sword.

The sound of gentle hammering resounded through the workshop and his work continued. He needed to take a couple of breaks and even meditated to get back his mana. Even with this, he wasn't able to

inscribe the lesser scorch rune in one day. The whole runecrafting process took him a whole three days to finish and he was left with a working product.

Bronze Leaf Shaped Sword of Lesser Scorching [ Intermediate, High ]

Roland looked at his new creation, this was a lot harder to make than one of the previous paddles. This was also his first working weapon, though making it bronze probably meant that it wouldn't last for too long.

He examined his reflection in the blade and then moved it up into the air before exclaiming...

"Flame on!"

He then injected mana through the wooden hilt, with the ethereal pathways skill in place this was finally a possibility. The runes in the blade shone and he could vaguely see the runic pathways lighting up as the magic structure was activated. A flame sword was thus created which made Roland grin slightly.

He was finally able to make a working weapon, even though it wasn't that usable it was a proof of concept. He laughed out loud while forgetting himself and waving the fire sword around as a kid would when playing with a toy. His momentary outburst of happiness was interrupted the moment someone called out to him from the back.

"Hey, are you really just a regular blacksmith..."

He turned around and saw Helci standing there and looking at his runic sword. She was out on adventures so he didn't bother hiding his runecrafting. He also was so focused on it that he didn't notice the girl's return.

"How long were you standing there..."

"Oh, about an hour, you seemed busy so I didn't want to bother you..."

She smiled while looking at the taller youth that still had a flaming sword in his hand.

"But I locked the door..."

He looked to the door and it was still closed.

"Oh, yeah. It was locked so I climbed through the opened window, climbing is nothing for a scout!"

Helci grinned as if she did well. She had climbed through the second floor window that he left open for some ventilation. It was still day so he also didn't leave any traps for thieves behind.

"That's not the important thing, how did you do that!"

Helci pointed at the glowing sword that Roland finally turned off. Her eyes were sparkling as if she was a kid in a candy store. Now he needed to explain himself to his own assistant and hope that she wouldn't spread this information around. He already was starting to get a headache.