

Roland was sitting down on a bench outside a certain building. This was the fifth he had visited today and the sun was already setting. He had gone through the city while trying to find himself a place to work. The first place wanted to make him sign a six-year contract that felt more like a scam than anything else.

He decided to continue with his search but what he found later was quite shocking. The first contract given was on the better side, the other places wanted to keep him there for longer. The terms were similar and the pay varied. Some wanted him to make a certain number of scrolls each day. Others wanted him to work for a fixed amount of hours for the entire week, he wouldn't even have days off.

'I made a big mistake...'

He thought that a big city like this would have many opportunities. He was sure that he would find something sooner or later, the reality was different. The store owners were all in cahoots, they made it hard for any new talent to get a good start. A new scribe wouldn't be able to earn any money at all. The prices of the materials were set so that only intermediate level spell scrolls would actually bring in profit. He didn't even know if they would buy scrolls from a third party like him or if they gave them a fair price, probably not.

Roland was now thinking that a smaller town might have been a better choice. They would probably offer him a less binding contract, one without a curse. The curse was also one that lowered your mana by 60% until the contract time ran out. For a mage, something like that would be crippling. Losing more than half of your mana pool would halt your progress dramatically.

His plan was to work as a scribe for a year or so. With his experience gaining trick he had reason to believe that he could reach 125 of this class by then. He figured that getting enough money for a class change crystal wouldn't be that hard, he even had enough right now. The reality was different though, no one from the established shops would let him test his skills in their shops for free. He would need to pay up in close to slave labor.

He had assumed too much. He thought that a mage class was a rare commodity. He thought that when the store owners heard that he was a mana scribe they would spread their arms wide and invite him in, no questions asked. He had underestimated how businesses operated here and that they already had a system in place.

Most of the scribes were kids from the magic academies. These academies were able to get better contracts for their students that were only working to level up and gain new skills for their future. If you were a solo act the contracts were much harsher as they didn't really care about you as a worker. Why would they if they got cheap labor from the magic academies instead?

'What are my other options besides signing one of those contracts?'

The youth looked out into the distance, the horizon was all red as the sun was setting. He could even see some priests from the Sun Church praising the sun and doing some strange pose with their arms outstretched into the air.

He could take the contract and work hard for those five or six years. He would probably gain a lot of experience through scribing and reach max level. He could hold out on using the schematics trick until he got to the blacksmith class if it showed promise. The problem was that he wouldn't really be able to focus on his smithing work. Some of the contracts even forbade part-time work at other places. He also feared that the smithing workshops could have similar agreements.

Another option was leaving this city and finding one without that many scribes. Maybe in a place where his class was rare, the shop owners would be more lenient. Still, he had no idea if they wouldn't just give him similar contracts or where a city like that existed. He also considered moving to a city with a dungeon and just doing scribe work on the side. That option would probably slow his leveling down as crafting classes gained less experience by slaying monsters.

'Is there a place I can sell my items in here?'

Roland had access to his debugging skill, so he could probably upgrade those runic spell scrolls to the highest rating. He thought back to the prices those went for and they overshadowed the regular spell scrolls. The problem was that no one was willing to buy them if they could get something cheaper in bulk that wasn't that much worse.

How much better were the highest versions of those runic spells? Was the biggest question, if he managed to get that fire arrow spell to be a lot more powerful than the competitions, he might be able to somehow do it. The construction materials weren't that costly, maybe if he bundled them ten apiece he could manage to scrape by.

There was another problem besides that, how would he explain that a boy of not even eleven was selling and producing runic spell scrolls at the highest rank? Would the people try to get his secrets, would they get violent? He wasn't sure how the businessmen around here reacted to the unwanted competition. He didn't think he would affect their bottom line with some scrolls so he mostly thought it would be safe in that regard.

Was there a place that he could sell his stuff without attracting attention? While still earning enough to get by and while leveling up. He didn't think there was such a convenient place in the regular stores or shops. Should he try peddling it out in the market while hiding his face behind his robe hood?

He remembered that there was one type of place that he could sell items like that. Such a place was an auction house. He could probably remain somewhat anonymous, the auction houses probably kept the sellers' names secret. This was probably one of the better options out on the table.

'I should head back to the inn, I'll try to scribe some regular spells first, I'll think about it later.'

He had enough for today, he couldn't make up his mind and the sun had already gone down. He could still work for an hour or two on his scroll making, then at least this day wouldn't be a total waste.

Roland hopped down from the bench he was sitting on. It was nicely made from some kind of metal, probably fashioned in place by some kind of smith or artisan. He took out an apple from his storage bag and bit into it. It was nice and sweet and worth the coin that he paid for it.

He wasn't in a hurry as he just walked forward. He looked at the people going back and forth, in the middle of the road there were horse carriages passing by, some of them were even pulled by some large ox looking, creatures. The people chatted with each other and they looked to be going to the taverns for some alcohol.

'People in this world sure like to drink.'

He attributed this feature to them not having any TV or internet here. There weren't that many places for people to spend their free time. There were some theaters but those were mostly occupied by the rich merchants and nobles while the commoners liked louder places like casinos or the aforementioned taverns. There was also the red light district where men liked to spend their coins on the various ladies of the diverse races.

Before his mind could wander to strange places he got brought back into reality. He heard someone ringing a loud bell and this person wasn't part of the Sun Church.

After glancing towards the direction of the noise he noticed quite the curvy elf lady. She wasn't the same one that he saw last time and she was even more beautiful. She was clearly dressed to show off and to pull in the attention of the crowds. She had something akin to those Chinese dresses with a lot of leg space. She was ringing that bell in front of a large gate, above it a picture of a scale.

"Gather up good people of Edelgard, the Libra Auction house will be opening in half an hour, be sure to bring your purses as we will be having a grand auction today!"

She continued talking while Roland spaced out for a moment. He didn't realize that there was this kind of establishment in the area. He inched forward together with the small group of people that was lured in by the bouncy elven girl.

"Step right in, the entrance fee is only two small silver, practically nothing!"

After hearing that they actually had to pay to get in most of the people dispersed while grumbling. Roland and a few others remained, some of them even paid the price and went in. He was hesitant as he didn't want to buy anything from there, he would rather sell his scrolls there but he didn't even have any items to show.

He was just looking for an auction house to sell his wares and one popped out. He was surprised that they were taking entrance fees, he thought that the more buyers the better. Why would you limit your earning potential?

This was just a way to weed out people that were only there to window shop. If someone actually paid a small entrance fee they would be more inclined to spend more inside. It would feel like a waste to partake in the auction, pay an entrance fee, and not get anything in return. It was also a strategy to keep the poor out and attract the rich.

He pulled out the map of the area and made sure to mark it down. From what he knew of such places, they took in stock during the day and sold them later at night just like now. He would return here another time with some items in tow. For now, he decided to return back to the inn he was staying at. He needed to test his scribing skills and in the morning go buy some of those runic spell scrolls that he saw.

Back in his room, he pulled out one of the special scrolls made from monster skin. It had a yellow tint to it and was rough around the edges. He placed the inkwell that he bought from the store on his small table along with a new quill. He was already a couple of large silver coins poorer after buying some of these supplies.

“I hope this pays off.”

He grumbled under his nose hoping for the best. First, he needed to practice, he would be focusing on runic spell scrolls but he wanted to at least go through the process of scribing a regular spell scroll. His aim was his mana arrow spell, the strongest attacking spell that he had. His basic mana scribing skill was at 11 so he wasn't expecting any grand results. He also wanted to check how much experience he would get from making one.

‘Source of all magic, heed my call...’

The process of mana scribing was a bit different than the runic counterpart. The scribe had to write down the spell onto the scroll while focusing his mana on the quill and ink. There were no intricate lines or runic components to slow him down, he just needed to spell out the right incantation onto paper in the correct language while focusing.

The mana arrow's incantation wasn't all that long or difficult, but putting ink to paper while focusing your mana was still difficult. After ten minutes he managed to get his first spell scroll and he heard the notification.

You have gained 20 experience points

He rubbed his chin afterward, this amount of experience wasn't all that great. It also wasn't that bad either if you took into consideration that he could do it from the safety of his home. A warrior could probably hunt down monsters faster in a shorter span of time, but a scribe wasn't put into any danger while crafting. He could also do it continuously if he had the materials and mana.

He tried identifying his own spell scroll, but besides getting its name there weren't any further stats. Maybe if he leveled up his scribing skill he would be able to examine the scrolls and get their rank and damage value.

‘How much will I get from a simple runic spell?’

He was now curious, he needed to compare the two. The problem was that he only had the knowledge of three runes and two of them weren't really fit to be scribed down as they were made for weapons. He decided on the fire orb rune as it was also a lot easier to scribe down.

He went through the motions while remembering his class change quests. This was already the third time he was drawing this rune so he had some practice. His fingers grasped the quill

and his hand moved slowly. The intricate runic symbols started to slowly appear on the yellow scroll as they connected into one complete runic spell.

You have gained 50 experience points

It took him about 45 minutes to finish, this was already faster than before but it still was a lot slower than with the regular scribing skill. He had gained more than double the experience but needed a lot more time to do it. He quickly looked at the scroll before him and ran it through his debugging skill. To no surprise, he saw some red lines.

It was one thing to know where the mistakes were and another to actually bring it to paper. Even if he didn't want it his hands weren't steady, his mana control wasn't perfect, and his concentration wavered from time to time. He just couldn't redraw the perfect diagram at his current skill level. He would need to practice before he could actually sell any of these personally made goods.

He came to a conclusion, making runic scrolls wasn't optimal for gaining experience points. He could probably make five regular spell scrolls and gain 100 XP while making 1 runic version gave him 50 XP. This wasn't a problem for him though as he could just make some schematics to even it out. What he wanted at this time was to earn more gold and he felt like the runic spells were the way to go.

There was also another discovery that he made. His debugging skill wasn't working on the regular spell scrolls, there were no lines he just couldn't see anything. This meant that runic spells and regular spells were different in some way or operated on different laws. How and why they were different he could only speculate.

Also, these runic spells didn't seem to mind that he didn't have any elemental affinities. The fire orb spell activated just fine even with his affinity for fire being at 0%. Which made sense as the point of these scrolls was that anyone could activate them.

It was a long way off but he theorized that when he achieved the runesmith class. He could very well make himself equipment with various spell effects. The only problem with those was the high mana activating cost that skyrocketed their upkeep.

'Okay, I have decided.'

Roland nodded, he would practice making runic spells and increase his scribing skill for them. He would then scribe them down in a bundle of ten for the auction. He was putting all of his eggs into one basket but he believed that this was the best way if he didn't want to trap himself with that contract for six years.

Thanks to his previous party members that had gifted him some golden coins he would be okay even for half a year with no work. He would use this opportunity that they gave him well. With a new battle plan on his mind he was reinvigorated, he just needed to power through this period and scribe like his life depended on it.