

## Three Gifts

She looked at the window in front of her, hesitating. Her core was filled with Essence, had been for a while now. She could advance. Step into the Evolved Realm. Yet a part of her was scared of it too. More power, as she had learned, didn't always mean more safety. It meant that more powerful people now took notice of you.

She felt Ryun reach out and take her hand, squeeze reassuringly.

“We will make sure that you become as strong as you possibly can,” he told her.

Anrosh nodded and then advanced before she could change her mind.

Her Qi shifted, it burned with cold, and turned into something more. Her core grew, the Qi quality improved. In one moment, she felt as if her whole body was just a hole in the world, filled with Absolute Cold. And then the change passed over her. A notification flashed in the corner of her eye.

Congratulations, you have reached Early Evolved Realm Stage on the Path of the Sword!

Reward—Evolved Form perk! You have stepped into the Realm of the Evolved, as such you now begin to manifest the power of your inner self and soul. You may choose in which way that power manifests.

Evolved Form: Wolf of the Absolute End (Path Perk)	Assume your Evolved form, that of the Wolf of the Absolute End. Your body turns into a giant wolf made out of your Qi aspects, your form gaining the properties of the Qi used (Current-Absolute Cold—N/A: everything you touch will lose its heat, lowering its temperature Gain +15% to wisdom). Gain +80% to all stats. All techniques cost 40% less and you gain +30% to
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	technique speed and your temperature affecting powers are 20% more effective. +15% to endurance and +15% to strength.
Evolved Form: Great Jotun (Path Perk)	Assume your Evolved form, that of the Great Jotun. You turn into a giant, your size increasing by 150%, and you gain +150% to all stats. All powers that scale of strength or endurance are 30% more effective. +15% to endurance and +15% to strength.
Evolved Form: Shield Maiden (Path Perk)	Assume your Evolved form, that of the Shield Maiden. In this form your senses are sharpened, your reactions improved, and your thoughts quickened by 100%. You can anticipate your opponents movements. You gain +50% to all stats and your stamina regenerates 25% faster, all defensive powers are 15% more effective. +10% to strength, +10% to vitality, and +10% to dexterity.

“The first one is mine,” Ryun said as he read through her choices.

She realized that she didn’t know what his Evolved powers even were. He heard the question even before she asked it, and showed her his screens.

He was, as he had always been. Such power, it was amazing. But she could see what he meant. The first choice she had been offered was his Evolved Form. She wasn’t surprised, she followed his inspiration, and their Aspects were similar in some ways. It wasn’t a choice that was tied to her Path, but his. The second was probably because of her new body. And the last was the choice based on her choices, the defensive nature of her perks and style.

“It is the most powerful of the choices, I think,” Anrosh said. “But... I am a fighter. Sword and shield, I don’t think that it would even be useful to me. I can’t use my main Path’s techniques with it... no, actually I might be able to. But... in it I couldn’t use a sword and a shield, no armor. I don’t think that I should take it. The Shield Maiden or Jotun are the ones for me.”

“There are ways for armor and weapons to be used even in that form. But, in the end, they could all be powerful picks, yes. But Anrosh this isn’t just about you and your power. It is about a statement, about Face, perception of our sect. And it is about you. About who you want to be. This is a choice more than any other you have had before. Remember what I asked you earlier? Who are you? Think about your choices, and think about who you want to be.”

She held his eyes for a long minute, and then she closed them and tried to do as he had said. She was a protector of their Sect... no, she protected, but she was more a caretaker, a guide. Ryun’s name protected them, Tali protected them. The people themselves protected them. She just stood in between them and everybody else. But who was she? The **Shield Maiden** would make her that protector, a shield and a sword. The **Jotun** would give her presence, something that she felt like she lacked. And what would the **Wolf of the Absolute End** say? It wasn’t tied to anything that she did, it was tied to Ryun. But... she remembered her answer.

*I am a mother, a sister.*

She opened her eyes and looked at him.

*They were family.*

She could be a lesser version of him, it was fine. It would show others, demonstrate to them an image that they would remember. She had no doubt that Ryun would show himself in his Evolved Form, that his actions would instill fear, respect, honor. And every time someone came for the sect, they would meet her. They would see her evolved form and remember him.

Yes, it was about more than usefulness. It was a message, a perception. *Face.*

“You are right,” Anrosh said, and she made her choice. It settled inside of her, and she met his eyes again. “Can I..?”

Ryun nodded, “Of course.”

She stood, still not wearing any clothes and used her perk.

The change came over her, her body changed, her Qi surged. She grew, her hands hit the ground and her body got covered in red and white fur. Once it was done, she felt... powerful, changed, but powerful unlike anything she had ever felt before. She looked down, saw that she towered over Ryun, she

had to be almost two stories tall. She looked at her feet, her paws that were freezing the ground where she stood, saw red fur and white, the same as her skin. Red base with white patterns all over it. Her claws were white, crystallized Absolute Cold Qi. Then, she felt something else, she moved on instinct and three shields moved over her, in her eyesight. They were larger than they were in her other form, shields shaped like diamonds, forged out of Qi, floating in the air not attached to anything. That was... good, it would help her a lot with the lack of weapons and armor.

She looked back at Ryun as she felt a surge of Qi from him too. Black and violet Qi surged out of him, enveloped him, and grew. A moment after a black wolf that looked like it was made out of mist stood in front of her. She saw the ground cracking, his Void devouring it. The air around him crackled too, as it touched his Qi. He was not flesh and blood like she was, he was a being made out of the Void. But they were the same. His claws and fangs were crystallized and violet Qi, just like hers were white. He was taller than her in this form, but not by much.

“Incredible, isn’t it?” He said in a growly tone of voice.

“It is,” Anrosh responded, her tone the same. “Thank you.”

“We still haven’t reached the end, I have one last gift for you,” Ryun said and changed back, she followed a moment after.

Once they were both in their usual forms they moved away from the frozen and consumed ground, near the single tree on the hill.

Then, Ryun pulled out a small box and offered it to her. “The first, out of three,” he said.

Anrosh frowned and took the box, then she opened it. Her eyes widened immediately as she looked at the two rings. Each of them was bone, she could tell, one was white and the other black.

<b>Ebony Ring of the Shrouded Mind</b>	+3500 to Intelligence  Ebony Ring of the Shrouded Mind hides your mind. While worn, no other non-connected mind or mental power can find your mind
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	with its detection. To reach your mind, they would need to strike blindly and hope to find their mark. While worn it also increases your mental defenses by 500%, and any attempt to touch your mind will send a counter strike with power equal to 10x your intelligence.
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<b>Ivory Ring of the Hidden Power</b>	+2000 to Intelligence +1500 to Wisdom  Ivory Ring of the Hidden Power hides your advancement. While worn, it shrouds your core and Qi usage, your perk and ability usage, and your skill usage.
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“Ryun, Eternal rings?” She asked.

He nodded. “I have learned just how important protections against mind attacks are. Wear at least that one always. I would suggest the other one as well. Smart opponents will know that them not being able to read you will mean danger, and the stupid will attack anyway.”

She glanced at the two rings again, each was worth more than what their sect had, what it could produce in a decade. A treasure, but then again, Ryun had told her that he had a wealth of an Empire. She pulled them out of the box and slipped them on.

Ryun nodded and then pulled out another item, a shield this time. It was ocean green in color, and looked rough, as if it was carved out of glass. He offered it to her and she took it from his hands.

<b>Shard of the Lazik Demon</b>	+3200 to Endurance
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When the Shard of the Red Demon is worn it passively increases your endurance by 15%. Blocking with this shield fills a meter, which after sufficiently powerful attacks had been blocked, acquires charges of Demon Wrath, to a maximum of 20 charges. The shield possesses several active abilities:

**Shield of Lazik**—Spend 5 charges to create a sphere shield around you, with the size up to 20 meters in diameter with the durability equal to 25x your endurance.

**Spear of Lazik**—Spend 5 charges to shoot a spear of kinetic energy from the surface of the shield with the power equal to 25x your strength.

**Summon Lesser Lazik**

**Demon**—Spend 10 charges to summon 1 lesser Lazik Demon to obey your commands for 25 minutes or until vanquished.

**Emerald Field**—Spend 15 charges to unleash a powerful field of Ocean Essence, once the essence hits solid state essence it will convert into liquid state, drowning the target.

“Heavens,” Anrosh looked at it in amazement.

“I’ve tested it a bit,” Ryun told her. “Lazi Demons are apparently water based. The summon isn’t that powerful, but it can be a distraction, and it does have other uses. The field will send a blast of mist around you that will

turn to liquid once it hits something. With you being able to freeze stuff, I think that it will be more than useful.”

“I’m sure,” Anrosh added, not knowing what more to say.

“Now, the last gift,” Ryun hesitated. “I picked all of these from what Zenker had, but this... this is the one that I think will be the most useful to you.”

He put his hand out, and a moment later a suit of armor appeared. It was... colorful, more beautiful than anything that she had ever seen. It looked like it was made out of scales that constantly changed color, which made it look like it was the color of moving rainbows. The chest piece had a two golden dragons, coming down from the shoulders where their tails made the shoulder pads, to the chest where their heads met, roaring at each other. Fine threads of deep red connected the plates that gave the armor extra movement. It had a small white fur neck wrap. A battle skirt fanned beneath the waist. The gauntlets were the same, scales up to the elbow, with golden plates on the hands and short white claws at the fingertips. The leggings were cloth with scale discs attached to it over the thighs, and boots incorporated the greaves that were covered in scales and golden plates. The helmet was shaped like a dragon’s head, and too was covered in rainbow scales that moved constantly.

She reached for the set and read its windows.

<b>Spectrum Celestial Dragon Plate (chest)</b>	+1500 to Endurance +1500 to Vitality +200 to Strength  When worn your stamina regeneration is increased by 350%. Every time you spend stamina by using a power increase all your armor pieces durability by +50% to a maximum of 350%. Adaptive, equip, repair, durability.
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	<p><b>Part of <i>Suit of Spectrum</i> Set; If all five pieces are worn activate <i>Spectrum Survival</i>.</b></p>
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<p><b>Spectrum Celestial Dragon Gauntlets (gauntlets)</b></p>	<p>+1000 to Endurance +1000 to Vitality +1500 to Strength</p> <p>When worn your stamina regeneration is increased by 250%. Every time you spend stamina by using a power you gain +50% to any physical damage that you deal to a maximum of 250%. Adaptive, equip, repair, durability.</p> <p><b>Part of <i>Suit of Spectrum</i> Set; If all five pieces are worn activate <i>Spectrum Survival</i>.</b></p>
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<p><b>Spectrum Celestial Dragon Helm (helmet)</b></p>	<p>+1000 to Endurance +1000 to Vitality +1500 to Intelligence</p> <p>When worn your mental stamina regeneration is increased by 250%. Every time you spend mental stamina by using a power you gain -10% to your power cooldowns, to a maximum of 90%. Adaptive, equip, repair, durability.</p> <p><b>Part of <i>Suit of Spectrum</i> Set; If all five pieces are</b></p>
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	<b>worn activate <i>Spectrum Survival.</i></b>
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<b>Spectrum Celestial Dragon Trousers (leggings)</b>	<p>+1000 to Endurance +1000 to Vitality +1500 to Wisdom</p> <p>When worn your mental stamina regeneration is increased by 250%. Every time you spend mental stamina by using a power you gain +50% to any special damage you deal to a maximum of 250%. Adaptive, equip, repair, durability.</p> <p><b>Part of <i>Suit of Spectrum Set</i>; If all five pieces are worn activate <i>Spectrum Survival.</i></b></p>
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<b>Spectrum Celestial Dragon Boots (boots)</b>	<p>+1000 to Endurance +1000 to Vitality +1500 to Dexterity</p> <p>When worn your stamina regeneration is increased by 250%. Every time you spend stamina by using a power you gain +10% to your physical speed to a maximum of 90%. Adaptive, equip, repair, durability.</p> <p><b>Part of <i>Suit of Spectrum Set</i>; If all five pieces are worn activate <i>Spectrum Survival.</i></b></p>
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**Suit of  
Spectrum Set:  
Spectrum  
Survival**

When all five set pieces of armor are worn you gain Spectrum Survival buff.

**Spectrum Survival:** Once a day you may designate an Essence for your armor to adapt to. Once chosen, the armor will change color and you will gain a 95% resistance to that Essence. Resistance to hybrid and related Essence will be lesser depending on the closeness to the Essence chosen, but never less than 30%.

“Put it on,” Ryun urged her.

She realized that she had just been staring at it for the past few minutes. Eternal armor, an Eternal Armor Set. How much power was this going to give her? She reached to the armor and used equip. It flashed and then it was around her. She closed her eyes as she felt the power of it, felt it ask something of her, an Essence choice.

“Pick something,” Ryun said.

She wondered what she should pick for her first try, and then she spoke. “Kinetic,” she said, settling on the simplest. Physical damage, or the energy that was transferred on impact.

The scales of her armor froze, the colors stopped moving, and then the scales rippled changing color. A few moments later every scale was gray in color.

Ryun walked over and punched her in the chest. She was more shocked from him doing it than from the result. Nothing happened, it might as well had been a tap.

“This is incredible,” Anrosh said.

“It is yours.”

“I can’t believe it,” Anrosh added.

Ryun chuckled.

“What is adaptive?” Anrosh asked, she had never seen that on an armor.

“Ah, that is another very useful addition,” Ryun said. “Why don’t you try and enter your Evolved Form?”

Anrosh blinked. “No way.”

All armor in the Infinite Realm could change shape, when it was first put on by a person. But only the armor given by the Framework. It adapted to its user. Crafted armor had to be made to size. This... she did as Ryun asked, and triggered her perk again.

She grew, changed, and her armor grew with her. Changing form. It fitted around her, shrouding her wolf form just as well as it had her ordinary one. She looked at it, in disbelief.

“That is so awesome,” Anrosh whispered, and changed back.

“Yes, it is,” Ryun added.

“Thank you, for everything,” she told him.

Ryun put a hand on her shoulder. “You never need to thank me. This is what family does.”

She agreed.