

Regeneration

“Any advice?” Ryun asked.

Tali grimaced and then nodded. “You went with utility for your Paths and Aspects. I would suggest full specialization for this part.”

Ryun tilted his head in a questioning manner.

“True regenerators like you are rare,” Tali said. “And with reason, to get to that point, get the perks necessary, requires both luck and effort, skill too. You are looking to make an extremely powerful merged perk, a unique one. You must understand that most people in the world will never get to see such perks. These potions that you found? They are rare, only a few people in the world could even craft things like that. The brother of the Dragon Heart Sect Head was an Ascended Realm Alchemist when I ruled my sect, he could do it. Less than a handful of the Alchemist Classers from the core too. I doubt that many others had risen in the time I had been crippled. But that is nothing, even if there are ten people that could do it, it would mean that there are what? That there are a hundred or a bit more of such potions in the world. On the scale of the population of our world, that is nothing.”

Ryun nodded, he understood just how lucky he was to have found Zenker’s hoard.

“The perk that you will get,” Tali continued. “It will be not only a higher tier, but higher rarity, something that few people will ever be able to replicate. In other words, unique. And let’s face it, defense—as in preventing damage from hitting you—was never really your strong suit.”

“I picked Stillness hoping to cover that weakness,” Ryun added, though he knew that the result wasn’t exactly what he had imagined.

“Bah,” Tali waved her hand. “Why would you even need defense when you can just survive anything that hits you? Besides, you’ve done well with Stillness, a few more years of practice and you will make it a lot better. Even now it can serve as a substitute for silencing power, you can just freeze in place any attack that comes against you. Especially since there are few things that you can’t see coming. You just need to work a bit more on your precision with those techniques.”

Ryun agreed with that. If he got better with his secondary Aspect, he could shape a box around any oncoming projectile, stilling it in the air, or around any other powerful attacks coming at him. His sense and his eyes allowed him to see and sense all Essence, anything strange he saw coming he could just still, giving himself time to evade or just investigate.

But going all in on regeneration... His endurance was high, be he had no perks that increased it. He realized that in the Realm he was now, there were very few people that he would ever encounter that wouldn't be able to just punch through his endurance. He didn't have any ways of boosting it aside from his mantle or all stat increases. His vitality scaled a lot better with several perks.

"You rely on healing yourself from injuries," Tali continued. "True, you can negate a lot of the punch from any attacks against you with your will, but... you've seen how hard that was to actually accomplish in battle, and the cost."

Ryun nodded in resignation. He had noticed that. He could decrease the power of a physical or special attack against him all the way up to 90%, but... he couldn't focus on doing it for more than once or twice in a battle, and even if he could, it drained too much from him. When he fought against people that could deal that much damage with each swing... defending himself by expending his will just tired him out faster. It was... a lot of resources that he had to juggle in a battle. Too much perhaps, he had somehow gravitated to just taking the hits and regenerating them.

He turned to his second Path and advanced, bringing it up to the Mid Heavenly Realm. Notifications informed him that the Path had jumped rarities, all the way to Relic. His main had advanced to Masterwork with his rise to Ascended, so he wasn't surprised. He turned his eyes to the choices for his perk improvement.

Path Perk Evolution Available for Endless Source of Stamina	
Grand Endless Source of Stamina	Your stamina is strengthened, the effects of your endurance on your stamina are now improved by 4x. +20% to endurance.

Rapid Restoration of Stamina— Rejuvenating Void	Your stamina pool size is now fixed and can never grow, but the effects of your vitality and intelligence on mental and physical stamina regeneration are now improved by 5x. +25% to vitality and intelligence. There is always more.
Slow Draining Stamina	All stamina costs are now paid over a period of 50 seconds from use, at rate of 2% per second. All stamina costs are reduced by 10%. +15% to vitality and endurance.

A direct upgrade, improving the size of his stamina pool which with his stats was large enough. He had never really gotten too tired in battle and he spent stamina for powers rarely. He could get tired, but it was mostly from exertion over time, prolonged fighting. The last choice was interesting, probably something to do with Stillness if he could guess. It delayed the costs, but again, he didn't really burn through much of it. The second choice was the obvious one. Rapidly regenerating his stamina resources would let him stay in the fights for longer, and if he was going all in on regeneration it was at least thematically fitting. He picked that one and put more Essence in for advancement, reaching his most important perk—Mu. He felt his body undergo a change, a rolling sensation of rebuilding came over him.

Path Perk Evolution for Mu—Primordial Void	
Grand Mu— Primordial Aspects	Your body is forged by your aspects and your paths. You are able to mitigate and ignore the effects of gravity as well as bring your body to a complete still state according to your will. Physical force influences against you can be absorbed by your body up to 90% of their power according to your will. Allows you to spend Void Qi to absorb special attacks impacting your body up to 90% of their power according to your will and Qi spent.

	Void and Stillness effects on your body, Qi Conduits, and Core, are lessened by 90%. Sufficient damage to your body will turn it into a insubstantial Void-Stillness mist form, expending Void or Stillness Qi can allow you to reconstitute your form. All Void and Stillness powers are 40% more effective. You gain +25% to wisdom +80% to endurance. The only one who influences here, is me. Consume and Still.
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Tali had warned him that he would have no choice here as he had decided to merge perks. If he had picked one of the other options he could've had a chance to take something else. There was no reason to regret though. The upgrade was exactly what he had hoped for, even though it wasn't anything big. Simply the integration of his second Aspect into it. It would help him nonetheless, make his techniques with Stillness easier to use. Allow him to handle the Stillness better and for longer before it started to affect him.

He looked at his Path, now Peak Heavenly, and debated with himself if he should continue. He knew now why people kept their secondary Paths low for long periods of time. Tali had told him that some kept from advancing them for centuries. His improvements were good, but what could he have gotten if he had waited a hundred years?

The perks that he would be able to improve next were... not necessary for what he planned, nor could he really use anything other than his immortality—which he didn't want to mess with. So ultimately he decided against going that way. He showed Tali his body upgrade and pulled out the merge potion.

“Well,” Tali started. “Let's hope that you don't kill yourself.”

Ryun knew that it was a possibility, the choice of perks was essential. He took the potion and then drank it, a prompt appeared and he made his choices. The process started and he felt his body collapse into nothing. Void and Stillness surged out of his core into the mist that coiled and twisted in the place where his body used to be. His mind was fuzzy, all his senses cut

off. There was only the Void, seeking to consume, and Stillness seeking to halt everything. Ryun felt his end. The Void and Stillness would battle each other, consuming and stilling until there was nothing left. He needed to do something, and so he exerted his will on the two Aspects. Void came more easily to him than Stillness, but his will took control of both. He tried to guide them to an equilibrium, but quickly realized that it wasn't going to be possible. He didn't understand Stillness nearly enough for that. Void was going to be the primary base of his body no matter what he tried. Yet, the stillness remained, it tempered the Void's need to expand to consume everything. There were other things, settling into him that he didn't recognize, threads of the Framework, his Class perks. Slowly Ryun felt the mist stabilize, more Void than Stillness, and his body came into being. It was done.

He looked at his notification first.

Congratulations! Perk Merge Successful!

Base Perk: **Grand Mu—Primordial Aspects — 100%**

Perk 2#: **Inner Refinement—Void Chassis — 98%**

Perk 3#: **Regenerator — 91%**

Perk 4#: **Rapid Regrowth — 88%**

Perk 5#: **Feast — 78%**

Perk 6#: **Rapid Restoration of Stamina—Rejuvenating Void — 86%**

Synchronization at 90.16% — Perk Merge successful

Adaptive Infinitum Chassis—Twilight of the End — Perk Gained

He had placed his stamina perk on suggestion from Tali because it involved vitality, which was the main stat that he wanted to focus his new body on. He glanced down on his body and saw... It was strange. He felt different in a way that he had never felt before his frame was made out of the Void with Stillness streaked through it, almost holding it together, giving it firmness in a way. He still looked the same, thankfully. Though he did see

that the cracks in his body had multiplied and grown larger. The void no longer left the cracks though. Now it was stilled inside the cracks, looking, well he didn't know how it looked as his eyes couldn't really see it. His sense told him that the cracks were now filled up, smooth and tough like crystal.

He glanced at Tali and saw her studying him.

“Well? How is it?”

Ryun pulled out the window and read through the description of his new body.

<p>Adaptive Infinitum Chassis— Twilight of the End</p>	<p>Your body is forged for adaptive regeneration. It is made out of the Void and the Stillness. You no longer suffer from stat impairment and sickness.</p> <p>You no longer have endurance. Your current endurance stats and bonuses are added to your vitality, you can never gain any more endurance. Endurance based effects don't work for you. As you have no endurance, any force impacting you will damage you.</p> <p>The effects of your vitality on your base regeneration of all types are increased by 5x. Your body constantly regenerates, your passive regeneration drains your stamina, the more damage it needs to regenerate in order to keep your body whole the more it drains. Anything that pierces your body will immediately start the adaptive regeneration process. Stillness of your body will still the attack and still the expansion of the wound, and Void will start destroying any foreign Essence and start regenerating your body, draining your stamina and Qi. Any time you are damaged, your vitality scales and increases based on the amount of damage suffered. The higher the damage you suffer the higher the boost to your vitality, starting at 2x to 100x.</p>
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	<p>Disadvantageous effects of Stillness and Void no longer apply to you. Your Void and Stillness effects are 30% more effective outside your body. You are able to halt your momentum instantly and can ignore the effects of gravity on your body.</p> <p>Adaptive Regeneration allows your body to adapt to any harm after regenerating. Suffering the same manner of attack again will have your body adapt and compensate, decreasing the effectiveness of the attack. Experiencing the same manner of damage a second time will have it only deal 80% of its damage to you. Third only 60%, fourth 40%, fifth 20%, on the sixth you are immune to that manner of damage. The effect lasts for three minutes and the timer is reapplied with each instance of attempted same manner of damage.</p> <p>You gain +50% to wisdom and +130% to vitality.</p> <p>That which does not kill me, makes me stronger.</p>
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After reading he understood. The strange feeling that spread through his body, everything was damaging him. The gravity pushing down on him was hurting him, but he just regenerated so fast that it didn't matter. His stamina regeneration was high enough that he didn't even sense that either.

He glanced at Tali who was studying him with interest. He made his screen visible and let her read while he turned his attention to his body. He still had crystallized Qi on the tips of his fingers. He reached over with one finger for the forearm of his opposite arm. Then he gently scratched. His body parted with no resistance, he had no resistance to anything, he had no endurance at all. But as he traced the claw across his arm the wound was closing up right behind him, so fast that it almost caught his hand. Next, he

pushed his claw straight through, it punctured his body and then... slowed, he could feel the Stillness attempting to slow, to bring it to stillness, but it wasn't doing anything really, he was immune to those effects. The wound was attempting to regenerate, pushing his finger out. He would need something else to test it out.

"Heavens," Tali said as she finished reading. "How are you feeling? This..."

Ryun stood up. He had gained a unique perk. Something on the same tier as an Eternal Realm perk, he felt. It was greater than the sum of its parts. But he needed to test it out, needed to learn everything before he stepped into combat.

He pulled out an eternal axe out of his storage and offered it to Tali. "I need you to cut me."

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Tali swung the axe from above, straight at his collar. It hit and cut through, moving downward, splitting him in half. But he could tell, feel it slowing as Stillness Qi flooded out of his core. It stopped inside his chest, stuck, still. Then the Void tried to attack it, disintegrate it. He saw Tali struggling, this was the second attack, the previous one had punched through to his stomach. Ryun felt his vitality soar, hitting high forty thousands without any mantle boost. Tali had increased her strength, but if his endurance was that high it wouldn't have done nearly as much. Still, he watched as the axe was pushed out.

"Hells," Tali whispered. Then she attacked again. It barely cut into his collar. The next attack barely scratched him.

After some more experimenting they realized that if she changed the direction of the attack, shifted the angle, or attacked in a different manner, his adaptive regeneration didn't work—it counted it as a new manner of attack. He was more than satisfied with the way his body ended up.

Now there was just one more thing left for him to do.