

CHAPTER 157 ANROSH & RYUN

ANROSH

Anrosh groaned as Nayra helped her sit up. Her chest felt numb, and her body felt weak. Her mind was foggy and she felt tired all the time, but she could feel that she was getting better. She just didn't know how long it was going to take.

Nayra guided her near the fire and the two of them sat down. Nayra gave her a bowl of stew that she made and Anrosh ate slowly, trying to keep her hand from shaking. The two of them were alone, as Ryun was out hunting monsters for the third day in a row. He usually took Nayra with him in the morning, but returned her by the afternoon or when she got tired.

It left Anrosh alone with Nayra for most of the day. She didn't know much about the woman. She had seen her training the warriors—Kri among them—but they hadn't really interacted much. Regardless, she was grateful to her for helping her now. Anrosh wanted to get better as soon as possible, and get back to her daughter.

Her defense of the swarm had given her a bit of Essence. It wasn't enough to advance properly, but perhaps she could raise her second path. She was sure that she would get more Essence once they found an Interface and she could collect her contributions. Even with the loss of the city, they had stopped the swarm, and everyone in the sect that contributed to the defense would be getting bonus Essence from the Framework. With the destruction of Ven'oran, one of the other cities would need to be chosen and an Interface designated as the main one before they could claim it.

But she didn't want to think about advancement, not before she healed fully. Whatever that attack that the Emberhorn had used damaged more than just her body. Anrosh didn't know exactly what it was, but if she hadn't felt her state improve she would've been a lot more worried. Now, she could only focus on getting better, and thinking over on what had gotten her in this situation in the first place.

She had attacked a Heavenly Realm Cultivator, had run straight into the group of his warriors, had managed to get near him, injure him even. It was an accomplishment that very few could've matched. For a moment there,

Anrosh had thought that she could be like Ryun, that she could fight against people so much stronger than her and win. It was a foolish thought, but in it she had learned something. She wasn't weak; she had power, and she would only get more of it as she advanced.

It made her elated to feel this way, filled with anticipation for the power that she could have in the future. She could catch up to Ryun, she only needed time. A part of her wanted to get out of this cave and go hunt monsters too, but she knew that she needed to heal first.

"This was good," Anrosh said as she finished her meal.

Nayra gave her a small smile, and gathered the bowl from Anrosh's weak hands.

"You can have some more, if you want?" Nayra asked.

Anrosh shook her head. "No, thank you. I'm full."

Nayra nodded her head and helped Anrosh back to the strange bedroll. The woman had been helping her without complaint, for which Anrosh was very thankful. Still, as Nayra moved to get her back in the bedroll, Anrosh gently waved her away. She needed to push herself if she was to recover. Pain stabbed through her chest, but Anrosh managed to accomplish her task. Once she settled in, she looked over to Nayra, seeing the woman's green eyes watching her carefully. Anrosh grinned at her and then felt tiredness catch up to her. She tried to fight it, to keep her eyes open, but then she felt Nayra's hand on her shoulder.

"Rest. Your soul needs time to recover," Nayra told her.

The woman knew a bit of what kind of a wound Anrosh had suffered, but not much—only that the wound she had suffered was relatively minor and should heal in a couple more days. Anrosh was at least glad to know that she wasn't permanently crippled.

She allowed her eyes to close and drifted off into sleep as two green eyes watched over her from above.

RYUN

Ryun returned to their resting place as the moon started to turn into the sun. His senses told him that Anrosh and Nayra were talking softly, and he didn't want to disturb them. Instead, he sat down on the edge of the plateau, his feet dangling over and brought up his screens. He had been killing monsters for days, harvesting what he thought was useful and gathering loot from the dead. His storage spaces were completely full, and he knew that it was time for them to return to Wolf's Grove. Ryun was speaking with Ereclaw regularly, and he had ordered his warriors—through Ereclaw—to hunt monsters near the town. The majority of the swarm monsters might be here, but there were still enough monsters in surrounding territories to be a threat.

Ereclaw had led attack groups against them, and they had been harvesting the corpses. Ryun needed to go and empty his rings, get everything that wasn't useful to the sect on the auction. He knew that he couldn't give the Emberhorn and the Last Ember Sect too much time, but he also didn't want to rush his vengeance.

He had a truly obscene amount of Essence. He had been hunting monsters for days—he had even made a lot of progress toward his skill quest, the swarm was filled with thousands of different types of monsters, and he had managed to find and kill 1031 different ones. His **[Reave]** had done most of the work in gathering Essence. Every day he would use it as much as possible, not always, as he did not take unnecessary risks and it did take a few moments for the ability to work. But, as his cooldown and the situation allowed, he used it. Over the last several days, he had used his ability on a few hundred monsters and taken their Essence.

From what he gained for the kills, from Avariel, and from his own cycling, he had more than 13,000,000 Greater Essence or rather 13,000 Celestial Essence, as it was now called on his screen. One Celestial Essence was equivalent to 1000 Greater Essence, just like how 1000 ordinary Essence was equivalent to 1 Greater Essence.

Of course, not all of that Essence was his—he owed a large part of it to the Sect. He needed to repay everything that they had taken, and give his people a bonus. Half of it would go to his people, but the rest was his to do

with as he willed. Right now, there was only one thought on his mind—to kill the Emberhorn.

A part of him wanted to go and kill him immediately, but Ryun suppressed that desire. The Emberhorn was strong, and Ryun wasn't going to go until he was sure that he was as strong as he could be. With all that Essence, he was certain that he could push himself to the Peak Heavenly Realm, and he planned on doing that, but not without first buying aspected Essence on the auction. For that he needed to go back to Wolf's Grove, and he did think that it was time. The amount of monsters in this territory had dropped significantly, both from him and Nayra hunting them, and because they moved to neighboring territories.

Still, there were things that he could do without an Interface. He looked at his screens, and then started putting Essence into his Class. He never cared for it, and in fact he didn't care for it even now. He knew that he had benefited from it, but a Class had never felt... right to him. And he remembered Tali's warnings. He leveled, getting himself to level 89 for the extra stats. He assigned the free stats and then moved off his Class.

It was a good place to leave it and forget about it. He was never going to push it higher; it was not what he wanted, no matter what power it could give him. In some ways, he hated it, hated how it didn't allow him the freedom, or how it just tacked power onto him. A Cultivation path improved him, his body, his mind, everything about him. A Class, on the other hand, had always felt like a borrowed power. He was going to use it, as **[Reave]** was incredibly useful not to, but he wasn't going to advance it, in part because he was afraid of it, of what an evolution could give him. If his **[Reave]** evolved further, if it started giving him even more power... He did not want it to come to a point where he was better off focusing on his Class because doing anything else would be leaving power on the table.

He loved Cultivation, he loved sitting in silence and drawing in Essence. It was the only time where he could be calm and at peace, and he was not going to allow himself to lose that. The Class was not his way and it was *never* going to be. If he could, he would've removed it, but since he couldn't he would suffer and use it.

After that, he turned to his second path, and his techniques. He had been spending quite some time during their preparation for the swarm thinking about them and how to improve them. His training with Anrosh had given him some ideas, but he didn't want to change them prior to fighting the swarm. There was little time for him to get accustomed to new techniques, and he felt that it was better to keep the old ones for the fight.

Now, he started moving Qi through his body, changing his base technique. It started the same: a pattern in his arm that was designed to create the boundary for the Qi. The change couldn't be too great. He couldn't change the core of the path, which was defense. But he could improve on it. His **{Qi Shaping}** was capable of creating simple geometric shapes, and now he focused on that part, trying to create something more complicated.

He focused on a wall, but instead of making a simple geometric shape, he did something else. He released his Qi in three short bursts, each building on the previous one. The first "wall"—or rather a small palm-sized plate—appeared out of his palm. Before the wall was finished, more Qi flowed, and out of the back of the wall grew another wall, layered behind the first, and then finally a third.

Ryun took his hand away and looked at the new wall. It was a layered design, each wall leaning on the other, slightly concave, with only a few points actually connecting them. He could've made them be independent, without them touching one another, but that would just be him using his technique three times in a row. It would take longer, and it would not be an improvement on the technique. This layered design was stronger than an ordinary wall, slightly weaker than if he had just used his technique three times; but it was one technique, and faster than if he just created three walls.

The notification in the corner of his vision told him that his technique had changed and tried to think if he was satisfied with what he had done. He created a few more shapes, making them layered, and experimented. There were a few more possibilities of what he could do now that he wasn't constrained by the simple shapes of the previous version. He created a curved layered wall that encased him in a sphere, and then a large pike layered in such a way that the point was a spiral. There were a lot more things

that he could do, but he refrained from experimenting too much. He nodded to himself and pulled out his notification.

Layered Qi Shaping	Create a layered shape made out of Qi. The construct is fixed in space, and its durability is equal to 9x (6x) your wisdom. Current limit is 3 layers per construct.
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Ryun was satisfied with the new technique, and then focused on his branch technique, adding the same Qi pattern to it as he did to the first. Ryun didn't really know how to explain changing techniques. When he was teaching her, Anrosh had told him that it was supposed to be like creating a formation inside your body, which he couldn't quite grasp. Every Cultivator knew instinctively how their techniques worked. With experimentation they could change them, by creating different patterns. Ryun had always somehow felt through the process, doing small changes that told him what certain patterns did. He had done most of his experimenting on Earth, even though he hadn't changed his techniques often.

On Earth, without his memories, he hadn't really seen the point. He was powerful enough to defeat anyone and anything. When he had tried to explain his process to Anrosh, to teach her, she told him that he was the worst teacher that she had ever had, and that he had taught her more than anyone else ever had. He wasn't really sure what she meant by that.

After a few minutes of tweaking his technique, he pulled up the notification.

Layered Qi Armor	Sheath your body in layered armor made out of Qi. Durability of effect is equal to 9x (6x) your wisdom. Current limit is 3 layers per armor creation.
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He could've changed his armor technique to be a single use and to have it dissipate over time, but he didn't have the limits of other Cultivators. He could keep a technique going for a long time. So, he left it as is.

Then he turned toward his main path, looking his branch and fruit techniques over. He was satisfied with his **{Null Mantle}** and he wasn't even sure how he could even improve it right now, but his two other techniques could use a bit of an update.

He focused on **{Breath of Destruction}**, remembering what his original technique used to be. **{Qi Burst}** had been a simple technique, allowing him to *shoot* bursts of Qi from any point in his body. He could only focus on one point at a time, and that limitation didn't change. He had focused it on using his mouth as a conduit for his Qi, simply because it allowed him to expel the largest amount of Qi in the shortest amount of time. There were more Qi conduits connecting to his lungs and throat than just his palm, for example. It was a powerful attack, but it had originally been more versatile. Now, with his Void Qi synergy, he doubted that he could get the same thing. Void Qi was too destructive for him to be able to propel himself around with it, as it would be disintegrating anything that it touched.

His current version of the technique expelled his Qi in a barely altered state, a plume of Void Qi that disintegrated anything that it touched. He could do better than that. He focused on the technique, borrowing the pattern from Qi Shaping and altering the way that his Void Qi was shaped. He didn't use the last part of Qi Shaping, since he didn't need the Qi to harden. Instead he focused it down, compressed his Qi further, and then when he thought that it was enough he sent the technique down his arm to his palm. A beam of Void left his palm, traveling extremely fast and piercing the sky. It stopped almost immediately as he ended the technique. He felt around the technique, doing small tweaks to make it more efficient. His eyes were incredibly useful there. He could see where his Qi moved through his body and could make sure that there were no wasted movements through Qi conduits that were unnecessary.

Finally, he looked at his technique notification.

Void Beam	Send out a beam of Qi out of your body, dealing variable Void energy damage depending on your wisdom the amount of technique channeling, and the amount of Qi used. Base damage equals 9x (6x) your wisdom. The beam marks anything that it touches, dealing one-quarter of total damage over the next four seconds.
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Ryun was satisfied with it. He could still fire it from his mouth, since that was from where he could shoot the most Qi in the shortest amount of time, but he could now use any part of his body. His palms were probably the only useful part, since that was where many of his Qi conduits ended. The others were mostly focused inward throughout his body.

Lastly, Ryun turned to his fruit technique. It was his most powerful technique, and it dealt an incredible amount of damage, but with all his improvements to his conduits and core it could be a lot better. He thought for a few moments about what he wanted to do and then looked down at his body as he changed the way his technique worked. He had an idea about what he wanted to do, and started altering the technique. He pushed his Qi through his body and saw the technique be born. He stopped before activating it, as he wasn't really in a place where he could test it out, but he felt that it was right. He glanced at his notification and smiled at his success.

He dismissed the notification and looked again at his second path, and then he started putting in Essence. The amount his second path needed to advance was nothing compared to what he had now. He hadn't advanced it previously because every Essence had been precious, but now there was no need to wait. He raised his second path to Peak Lord and a window popped up in front of his eyes.

Peak Lord Improvement Available

Stat Boost	Gain +50 to two base stats of your choice permanently.
Perk Change	Change one of your Cultivation path perks.
Core and Conduits Improvement	Improve your Core and Conduits. Gain +5% to Qi speed and +5% to current Core capacity.

Ryun looked at the choices. The core and conduit improvement wasn't really that appealing to him, since he had done everything that he could to improve them on his own. He could see how it could be important for other Cultivators. The Perk Change one was appealing, but he didn't really have a perk that he was dissatisfied with. The Stat Boost, on the other hand, was interesting. Most of his power came from boosts, and while 50 stats wasn't much, not to him at least, but it was added to his base stats. That would increase all his other boosts that scaled off it. His percentage-based titles did give him a lot of power.

He spent a few moments thinking about it and then made his choice, taking the stats. He chose to put them in endurance and vitality as two of his most important stats. He valued his toughness and healing a lot more than anything else.

With that done, a new notification appeared in the corner of his eye, and he pulled it up.

Congratulations!

Your Path of the Unbreakable Wall has improved!

Qi Shaping > Layered Qi Shaping

Qi Armor > Layered Qi Armor

Your Path of the Unbreakable Wall is now Epic!

He had expected that. With advancement his path's rarity had improved, mostly because he had improved his techniques sufficiently.

With all of that done, he stood slowly and headed inside the cave. His senses told him that Anrosh had recovered enough that he felt she could handle the trip to Wolf's Grove. Tomorrow they would set out, and then he would finish his preparation for killing the Emberhorn.

CHAPTER 158 RYUN & NAYRA

RYUN

The Wolf's Grove looked only a little bit different than it used to. The walls were manned by more warriors than usual, and people living inside the walls were more alert as well.

The entire territory was teeming with monsters—not as many as there had been around Ven'oran, but enough. Ryun could tell that the people in the city were all relieved when he, Nayra, and Anrosh arrived. They had been barely hanging on, the only word that they had was from Ereclaw, and while all knew that he was Ryun's contracted partner, Ryun could tell that they hadn't quite believed it.

So Ryun made the rounds, reassuring everyone. The town was filled to the brim with people. The non-combatants from Ven'oran had been split between Wolf's Grove and the other Twilight Melody territories, and with the monsters outside of the wall, they were all stuck inside.

The first thing Ryun did was go to the Interface and designate it as the new main one. Then he put in half of his Essence into the Sect's pool and made Nayra a Sect Leader. She had been surprised when he did so, but Ryun assured her that she had proven herself. Surviving the swarm was no small thing, but he had seen her fight and she had done well training other warriors. He gave her a bundle of records that Eerv and Anrosh had made with amounts of Essence that every sect member gave and put her in charge of repaying them all back and giving them bonuses. Many of the warriors had died, but some who had managed to escape had made their way to Wolf's Grove. He told Nayra to make sure that the families of the dead warriors got something extra and then he went to find Tali.

He had sent Anrosh ahead to the crippled woman, because he knew that what had happened to her was similar, and he wanted her opinion. He didn't think that what happened to Anrosh was nearly as damaging as what had happened to Tali, but he wanted to make sure.

He walked into the small training hall, his sense telling him that Tali had finished her talk with Anrosh. The woman couldn't see, and while Ryun was sure that she had at least one skill that still somehow worked and allowed

her to have a sense of her surroundings, she had to rely on what Anrosh told her.

He waited outside of the room they were in, and Tali walked out a few moments later. He made no attempt to hide his presence and she seemed to have noticed him immediately.

“She’ll be fine in a few more days. That amount of soul damage is more of an annoyance than anything else,” Tali said. “Well, unless it obliterates something vital. She was lucky that she has two hearts. This level of damage usually slows down regeneration; the fact that you used healing potions aggravated the issue, but I guess you had no choice. Her body healed incorrectly, but it will heal further as the soul damage gets repaired.”

Ryun nodded his head, his sense already having told him that Anrosh was improving. “This is what happened to you?” he asked.

Tali hesitated for a moment, then nodded her head. “In a way. The differences are night and day, but I did suffer a soul-damaging attack. The parts of my soul that corresponded to my core and conduits were burned out, and then I was healed. My current state is the result, as the damage was too much for it to be healed over time.”

Ryun could see inside of her, his eyes showing him her conduits and her core. It was a twisted wreck, a mangled labyrinth of conduits and shriveled mess that had once been her core. He couldn’t even imagine losing his own Cultivation. Seeing what could happen... It made him both angry and apprehensive.

“The little bird is dead, then,” Tali said.

Ryun blinked and raised his eyes to look at her scared face. “Yes, he fell fighting the Emberhorn. The same attack that only hurt Anrosh killed him. I healed him, but his heart wasn’t... It was too weak to keep his body alive.”

Tali’s face twisted into a complicated expression. “Such attacks are rare for people on this stage. Not unheard of, but rare. If he had suffered a wound on any other part of his body, he would’ve survived.”

“Is there a way to prevent such damage?” Ryun asked.

Tali nodded. “Of course. As you grow in power, you will gain defenses against such things. Endurance will start to mitigate the threat once your soul becomes more anchored to your body, which begins in the Immortal Realm.

For now, your best bet is to avoid getting hit. Soul damage of the kind that hurt Anrosh and killed Eerv is usually percentage based, dealing a fraction of the damage of the attack as soul damage. That means that the attack that the Emberhorn used was incredibly powerful for it to deal even as much damage as it did on his current stage. It isn't really that dangerous, not more than his attack already is. You would need to avoid his attack anyway—the soul damage just makes it harder to heal.”

“So, no using potions if that happens?” Ryun asked.

“No, as they heal you based on the current state of your soul. It would be better to let your body heal naturally since it remembers its previous state. Relying on vitality or a regeneration perk would be better. You will heal properly, but the healed area would feel...numb until the soul damage is healed as well. But it wouldn't cripple you, at least.”

Ryun nodded his head. He wanted to talk more about this, but he saw that Tali was uncomfortable. He knew little of her and Eerv's relationship. He had held her as a slave, and yet his death had clearly affected her.

“I'll come by later, to talk, if you are willing,” Ryun said.

Tali nodded her head mechanically. “Yes, later.”

Ryun left her in the small training hall and headed back to the Interface. He wanted to put some items on the auction and to try and purchase some others. He had enough Essence to advance, and he needed to prepare.

It was a week later when he managed to buy everything that he needed. He had placed a few of the items he looted on the auction house while the rest he kept as something to be used for the sect. For the things he had placed on the auction, he had gotten quite a bit of Essence. The vial of youth was sold immediately, and for an insane amount of more than 5,000 Celestial Essence. Someone out there had really been in need of it. The bidding had gotten a bit out of hand, and he was certainly satisfied with the amount of Essence that he had gained.

Ryun knew that advancing in this way wasn't the best, but he had little choice. He would rather seclude himself somewhere and draw in Essence himself, but it seemed like there was always another threat. So, he had bought more assorted Essence from the auction house. He had even been lucky enough to find some Void Essence, which he paid a bit more for, but he didn't regret that. The rest had been of Shadow Essence.

He left the town and went up into the mountains, near the Absolute Cold shrine, and settled in to advance. He cycled through his body slowly, improving the size of his core. He cycled his Shadow Essence for the last cycle, and then advanced to the Mid Heavenly Realm. The advancement came over him as it always did, and he took in the feeling of it.

Once it was done, he looked at the window in front of his eyes.

NEW PATH PERK AVAILABLE	
Endless Source of Stamina (Path Perk)	Your stamina is strengthened. The effects of your endurance on your stamina are doubled. +10% to endurance.

It was another perk that had no choice, that was determined based on the things he had done in the past. Since stamina wasn't his focus, he wasn't surprised that the perk wasn't anything special. He dismissed the window and brought up the second one that had appeared. He grinned as he saw it: his Path of the Final End was now legendary. He wondered how that was going to impact his perk choices in the future.

He dismissed the window and started cycling again, focusing on his core. His techniques were all focused on sustained Qi draw, so improving his core made sense. He felt like his conduits were already reinforced enough that it wasn't going to be an issue in the future.

On the last cycle, he used the Void Essence that he purchased. As soon as he drew it in, he felt...different. It was as if the Essence just fit inside of him, as if it was always supposed to be there. He cycled it through and then took a deep breath as he triggered his advancement.

This time he felt a lot different—his body felt as if it was on fire, and the effect didn't leave after a while. He frowned and looked at the notification, his eyes widening as he saw a choice.

Path Perk available: Forging of Body and Aspect	
Voidwrought	You are immune to all damaging effects of the void. Your body is now considered Voidwrought elemental. As long as your body has access to an influx of Void Qi or Void Essence, it will survive. All physical damage against you is reduced by 90%, and all immobilizing effects are 90% less effective on you. You no longer have any organs; your body is wrought out of the Void. Physical changes will manifest. Gain +20% to wisdom and +20% to endurance.
Void Transcendent	Your Qi channels and core are immune to all damaging effects of the void. Your body has transcended and adapted to your Void Qi. All Void Qi techniques and powers deal 50% more damage. Gain +20% to wisdom and +20% to vitality.
Mu	Combine all your body type Path Perks and gain a forged body that is a combination of them all. WARNING: result may vary depending on the synergy of your body-related perks! You will lose your current body perks; some aspects of them will be retained and some will be lost.

Ryun blinked at the choices, or rather the two choices and the gamble. His body was still burning, and he figured that it was in preparation of the change. Yet, Ryun wasn't sure what he wanted to do. The first choice would turn him into what was basically a void elemental, he would become a being made out of the void. The second choice would have him retain his humanity, and give him a smaller boost, although +50% to damage wasn't a small gain. The last choice was something else entirely. He would lose some of his perks, his **True Body** and his **Void Touched Body**, but would gain something that was a combination of the two. He didn't know if the risk was worth it. He did feel like his body perks synergized very well, but he wasn't sure what he could get that was better than what he had offered.

He looked over the choices again. He dismissed the first one immediately; he wasn't really adverse to being turn into an elemental monster, but being dependent on the Void to survive could be problematic, especially since he didn't have a source of it available. The second was good, if a bit simple.

It seemed like the choice was easy, but then he took a deep breath and picked the last choice. He hadn't gotten to where he was by being careful and by avoiding risks.

The burning in his body increased and he felt pain spreading through his body. He grit his teeth even as a pained gasp left his throat. He looked down and saw his skin splitting apart, a crack appearing in it and spreading up across his hand and beneath his robe. He felt more cracks in his body and let a scream out.

The process filled his mind with noise and he lost any sense of time. Then, finally, after a while he could think again. He was curled up on the cold stone, and slowly he moved, his body feeling like it had gone through a meat grinder.

He looked at his hands, noticing a crack going from the back of his hands upward, a line running along his arms. He could feel more of them over his body, some short, others longer. He could see Void Essence in the cracks, which now that he looked more closely weren't really cracks, just lines of Void Essence that were etched on his body. He shook his head and stood

slowly. His leg pushed off the ground and suddenly he found himself moving away from the ground. His eyes widened as he moved away from the stone and as soon as he focused on that fact he felt gravity reassert itself on his body and he fell to the ground.

He groaned then slowly turned to lie on his back. He brought up the notification to his eyes and looked at it.

Forging of Body and Aspect: Mu— Primordial Void (Path Perk)	Your body is forged by your aspect and your path. You are able to mitigate and ignore the effects of gravity 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 effects on your body, Qi Conduits, and Core are all lessened by 90%. Sufficient damage to your body will turn it into an insubstantial Void mist form, and expending Void Qi can allow you to reconstitute your form. All Void powers are 25% more effective. You gain +20% to wisdom and +70% to endurance. The only one who influences here is me.
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Ryun looked at his new perk. He had lost some things and he had gained others. But on the whole, he was more than satisfied, or he would be once he figured out how to control the effects of his body. It wouldn't really be dignified for a Sect Head to float away with every step he made. He glanced at his full screens to see his changes.

Perks	
Feast (Class Perk)	Killing enemies heals you. Strength of effect depends on vitality stat.
Tinker's Mind (Path Perk)	Your mind is quickened, able to think faster than ordinary humans. You are able to alter your perception of time. +15% to intelligence. Strength of effect equal to 2x your intelligence.
Vampire (Class Perk)	Killing enemies adds one-tenth of their highest stat to your own temporarily. Strength of effect depends on level.
Void Forged Core (Path Perk)	Your core is forged by the Essence of the Void. Core capacity is increased by 20%, Qi density by 40%. You are able to create a personal void space inside of your core. +20% to wisdom. Size of void space dependent on wisdom stat.
Regenerator (Class Perk)	Heal rapidly when in combat. Strength of effect depends on vitality stat.
Silent Hunter (Class Perk)	Your movements don't disrupt the air around you, making you nearly silent. Strength of effect depends on dexterity stat.
Qi Controller— Thousand Threads of Destruction (Path Perk)	Your Qi control is nearly perfect. You are able to finely manipulate your Qi and use up to 3 techniques at the same time. +20% to wisdom. Control depends on wisdom stat. You weave a thousand threads of Qi, each thread filled with power. As you weave, you ensnare all those who would stand in your way.
Indomitable (Title Perk)	You are immune to all mind-altering effects from opponents who are of a lower level or Cultivation stage than you.
Reaper's Aura (Title Perk)	You can no longer be scanned by any abilities, technique, or skills from people who are less than twenty levels above you, less than a single stage above you,

	and whose skill level is less than one tier above your highest. You may manifest the Reaper's Aura, filling all within your presence with dread.
Great Hunter (Contract Perk)	Any person whose blood you have drawn is marked by your power. The mark allows you to track them, no matter the distance between you.
Shadow's Favorite (Bond Perk)	When standing in the shadows, your form blends into your surroundings. Strength of effect depends on the depth of the bond with the awakened object, and the darkness of shadow.
Void Qi (Aspect Perk)	Your Qi passively enhances your body with the essence of the Void. Gain +20% to Strength and +20% to Wisdom.
Aspect Manifestation: Void Aura (Path Perk)	Manifest your Qi in the form of an aura around you. Dealing Void damage equal to 0.6x (0.1x) your wisdom per second. Anything marked by the Void Qi additionally takes one-quarter of the total damage dealt over the next four seconds.
Eternal Hunter: Reaper (Unique Perk)	You hold the essence of Twin Aspects of True Death. You are one part of two, and are inescapably linked with your other half. Your mind is linked with that of your other half, allowing you to speak to each other regardless of distance. You may sense your other half regardless of distance. You gain Death Mark : Anything with a soul killed by you has its soul completely destroyed and returned to oblivion. You gain the ability to sense death. You gain the Presence of the Eternal Hunter Aura: when active, nearby enemies suffer -25% to all regenerative effects and -25% to total stats. Half of the drained stats are granted to you, and the other half to the Scythe.

Rapid Regrowth (Class Perk)	Once per week, regrow a lost body part. Speed of regrowth depends on your vitality stat.
Physical Appearance: Refined (Class Perk)	Your body and features are refined. Enhances your current capabilities. +15% to wisdom, +15% to dexterity, +15% to vitality.
Ruler's Eyes: Astral Eyes— Sights Unseen	You have achieved great power, and your eyes reflect your achievement. Their appearance reflects your inner spirit. You are no longer able to see the real world; instead, you see a world in between the Ethereal and the Real. Allows you to see Class, Cultivation, and Skill, as well as power currents. You gain +10% to vitality, +10% to intelligence, +10% to wisdom. You thrive in the darkness, and now your blind eyes see what others cannot.
Abyssal Core— Void Well (Path Perk)	Your core is an abyss of the void. Your current total core capacity and your current Void space size are increased by 50% of current total. +10% to wisdom. Your core is an endless abyss. Nothingness and incomprehension rule here.
Endless Source of Stamina (Path Perk)	Your stamina is strengthened. The effects of your endurance on your stamina are doubled. +10% to endurance.
Forging of Body and Aspect: Mu— Primordial Void (Path Perk)	Your body is forged by your aspect and your path. You are able to mitigate and ignore the effects of gravity 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 effects on your body, Qi Conduits, and Core are all

	lessened by 90%. Sufficient damage to your body will turn it into an insubstantial Void mist form, and expending Void Qi can allow you to reconstitute your form. All Void powers are 25% more effective. You gain +20% to wisdom and +70% to endurance. The only one who influences here is me.
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Name	Ryun Nacht
Race	Human (Earth—Iteration 7)
Titles	First Kill, Adventurer, Hero of Promise, Transcended, First Body of Iron, Beaten but not Broken, First Quickened Mind, Cannibal, One Against Many, First Lake of Qi, First Lord, First Qi Manipulator, One Against Horde, First True Body, Hated Foe, One Man Army, Butcher of Humanity, True Understanding, Limitbreak, Monarch, Ruler, Alchemical Tester, Heavenly
Essence (Greater)	13,718 Celestial Essence

Class	Harbinger (E)
Level	89
Combat Ability	Bringer of Sorrow
Movement Ability	Inevitable Step
Support Ability	Reave

Cultivation	The Path of the Final End (L)
Stage	Peak Heavenly
Aspect	Void

Base technique	Null Mantle
Branch technique	Void Beam
Fruit technique	Staggered End

Cultivation	The Path of the Unbreakable Wall (E)
Stage	Peak Lord
Aspect	Void
Base technique	Layered Qi Shaping
Branch technique	Layered Qi Armor
Fruit technique	Avatar of the Reaper

Passive Skills	Active Skills
Combat Mastery (10/10) >> Sword Mastery (10/10) >> Sword Art (2/10)	Perfect Cut
Perfect Resonance Sense	Pounce >> Enhanced Pounce (2/10)
Enhanced Balance (10/10)	Aim (7/10)

Strength	935
Dexterity	877
Vitality	1230
Endurance	1204
Intelligence	884
Wisdom	1366

The loss of two perks didn't hurt that much, since the bonuses seemed to have been added to what his new perk gave out.

Slowly he tried to get up and move, while trying to focus on allowing gravity to work on him. It wasn't as easy as he thought, but he managed to stand. Once he was up, he took a deep breath. It was not going to be easy to master this power, but he knew that he needed to do so before he went after the Emberhorn.

NAYRA

Nearly a month had passed since Ryun had gone away to train—or at least that was what he'd said—leaving Nayra in charge. She hadn't been exactly comfortable with that much trust being put in her hand, and the amount of Essence that he had given her access to was...enough to tempt anyone, and as a Sect Leader she was able to use it as she willed. In the end, she didn't want to betray that trust, and she had done as he had asked. She had used the Interface to give out Essence to the sect, even the ones in other cities. Those people in the sect would need to find an interface to claim it, but it was done. The people of Wolf's Grove were all ecstatic, as the amount of Essence that they had been given was a treasure for most of them. There had been many newly advanced people in the town.

A week after Ryun left, Anrosh recovered enough that she could take over some of the duties herself, and she had begun teaching Nayra a bit about keeping a sect operating. There was more to it than she thought; but with the state of things and the fact that the sect was basically separated from other territories, there wasn't much that really needed to be done.

They were organizing hunts for monsters beyond the wall, making sure that they had enough meat to feed everyone, and gathering ingredients from harvesting corpses.

So, Nayra focused on training with her new abilities, sparring a bit with Anrosh. Both of them teaching the other some new things. Anrosh also got her interested in improving her Cultivation. The path that she had been given was meant to make her fighting capabilities better, to improve her Class. But it wasn't anything special, the Empire had very few Cultivators and they did

not share what they knew with others. But even the most powerful Cultivator in the Empire would be considered below average even here on the Frontier. Still, with the way that the Twilight Melody Sect now shared some of its knowledge, she could probably advance properly. The blind woman held some classes every few days, and she planned on attending some.

A month after he'd gone away, Ryun returned.

Nayra was mid swing when he dropped from the sky, his body slowing and landing gently on the ground. Both Anrosh and Nayra, having been training, turned to look at him, noticing the change immediately.

Ryun walked over to them and Nayra took the time to take in the changes. His body was different. The tips of his fingers were violet in color, and looked almost as if they were made out of crystal. He had a line, maybe a finger's width thick, moving from both of his hands over his forearms to disappear beneath his robe. He had two lines on his face coming from beneath his hair line and over his eyes, stopping in the middle of his cheeks. Two lines rose over his throat and curved behind his neck. The lines were of the same violet color, and appeared to be almost misting gently.

The way he walked was different as well. It was as if he was barely touching the ground, almost gliding across it. He seemed to be moving his legs slowly, but he was moving faster than the effort should allow him to.

As he came to stand in front of them, she heard Anrosh sigh.

"You advanced again," she said.

Ryun's mouth quirked up into a smile and he nodded his head. "I did, and now it is your turn. Then we are going to go and pay the Emberhorn a visit."

CHAPTER 159 RYUN & ANROSH & NAYRA RYUN

The city far beneath his feet was finally coming awake. It was a large city, as large as Ven'oran had been: nestled on the bank of a river, in a large valley, surrounded by farms and watchtowers. The walls were stone, and high enough, Ryun supposed, with towers every two dozen meters or so. The people who worked the farms were walking out of the three gates, escorted by warriors. It was smart, as the monsters from the swarm had reached even this territory, although not in any large numbers just yet. Ryun had seen a few small packs try to attack farmers three times already, however. A lot of the Emberhorn's city warriors were outside its walls. This was a good thing—for Ryun at least. Not so much for Emberhorn.

Ryun stood on a platform made out of Qi, waiting for everyone in the city—Emberhill—to wake up. The Emberhorn himself had only just recently woken up, and was currently having breakfast on the balcony of his palace. The palace was nestled in the center of the city, on a small hill, surrounded by another ring of walls, similar to how the main compound in Ven'oran had been.

Ryun waited, his hand toying with a ring on his finger. It used to belong to Eerv, and he had recovered it from the man's things after they had cremated his body. He hadn't realized what it was until only a month ago, when he had finally went through Eerv's storage ring and his belongings. The old Viper had some secrets after all. The ring was special, and it was the only thing of Eerv's that he had taken for himself, aside from the awakened spear, but that he had already given away. Seeing that spear in his storage had made him think of another awakened spear that Ryun had, but parting himself from that one was a lot harder than it might have otherwise seemed.

Still, Eerv had some powerful items, most of which Ryun had stored, and some which had been given out to those who had proven themselves—or rather Anrosh and Nayra had given them out. Ryun really didn't know much about the people he ruled over. That was going to change going forward, but for now he would trust in Anrosh and Nayra.

The city was awake, and now it was time.

Ryun pulled out a small cube from his storage, elaborately carved: a voice-magnification array that he had bought on Auction. He moved Qi through his body, and activated **{Null Mantle}**, pushing stats into his vitality, endurance, strength, and dexterity. He took a deep breath and then activated the array as he spoke as loud as he could.

“People of the Last Ember Sect, I am Ryun Nacht, Sect Head of the Twilight Melody Sect.”

The commotion beneath him was immediate—people were confused, attempting to discover the source of his voice.

“Your leader made an agreement that he broke, betraying my sect, and your warriors killed my people. For this, there is only one punishment. I give you all a single chance: lay down on the ground with your hands behind your heads and you will live to see another day. All those who stand in my way will meet their final end.”

Ryun paused. The city bells started to ring, an alarm going out. Not that it was needed, as everyone inside and outside the city had heard his voice. The Emberhorn was standing on his balcony, a knife and a fork still in his hands, his eyes turned up to the sky. Ryun wondered if the man was going to try and attack him from so far away, but no attack came. The man was too shocked for that.

“Emberhorn,” Ryun spoke, meeting the Emberhorn’s eyes from far away. “For your treachery, you will die. The only question is how many of your people will die with you. Use the knife in your hand and cut your own throat now, and I will spare your people. Fight, and I will rip through your city, leaving death and destruction. Either way, you will die.”

The Emberhorn glanced down to his hand, seeing the small knife, and then dropped it. Fire blossomed in his hands, and Ryun saw that he had snapped out of his shock. The Emberhorn raised his hand and prepared to fire, but Ryun stepped back and turned midair, so that his head was turned toward the ground. He kept gravity from pulling him down, and while he couldn’t nullify all of it, he could nullify it enough that he was barely moving toward the ground. He crafted a platform above his feet and then pushed himself down as he let gravity reassert itself on his body.

He sped toward the ground, sending a thunderous boom with his passing. As he neared the large square halfway across the city from the palace, he turned to land on his feet and bleed off 90% of his momentum.

He landed among the screaming populace of Emberhill. Most of them were demasi, but there were humans of every type and a few members of the races that Ryun hadn't encountered yet. He didn't focus on that; instead, he waited in the center of the square. As he waited, he activated his **{Layered Qi Armor}** and an armor made out of violet plates of Qi manifested around him.

The Last Ember Sect warriors were quick to respond, those who were close. Almost a hundred warriors ran into the square, pushing through the throng of people. It wasn't really surprising that they had arrived so fast, since one of the city's four barracks was nearby. It was why Ryun had landed there.

The warriors fired arrows and bolts of fire at him from far away, but Ryun didn't move. The attacks hit his armor and broke against it as he kept a steady flow of Qi into it, repairing the damage as it was made. He started preparing another technique as the warriors charged. He twisted the ring on his finger and looked at them. Ten of them were Peak Monarchs, and the rest were all below that.

The fact that their attacks weren't working made them come at him close. He saw them preparing techniques to fire at point-blank range, trusting that their numerical advantage was enough against a Cultivator one Realm above them. If they were facing someone like Eerv, perhaps that belief would've been right, but Ryun had never excelled in one-on-one battles.

A mist of red exploded out of him as they were only a few paces away from him, and the **Presence of the Eternal Hunter** hit them. They faltered for a moment, and then he released his newly improved technique.

{Staggered End}

The blast exploded out of Ryun, and a violet sphere that smashed into them. Anyone below Monarch who had been within ten paces of him disintegrated immediately. The wave traveled beyond, disintegrating the stone and damaging the armor, weapons, and bodies of the warriors further away, reaching all the way to the end of the square. The Monarchs who

managed to weather his attack stepped forward, and then the second part of his technique hit. The second blast, more powerful than the first, billowed out, shattering their armor and weapons, disintegrating their flesh and bones. Only two of the Monarchs survived, their bodies glowing with Void Qi that was disintegrating their skin even as they tried to regain focus and use their techniques. The stone beneath Ryun's legs had cracked and a small crater was beneath him, but he stayed in the air, floating as he refused to let gravity pull him down.

And then the last wave exploded, the most powerful one. The wave of Void Qi shattered the ground, disintegrating anyone who managed to survive inside the one-hundred-meter wide square. Ryun dropped on one of his steps, a cube made out of Qi and looked around. The square was no more, now being just a crater that was glowing with Void Qi as the secondary effects burrowed into the ground and created fissures. The first row of buildings around the square had been hit as well, and the walls had collapsed, taking down other buildings around them.

People who had been outside its range stood frozen with shock, but Ryun paid them no heed. The square hadn't been totally empty of non-combatants when he'd used **{Staggered End}**, but since none of them had dropped on the ground as he asked, he paid them no heed.

He did not pretend now, did not hold himself back. He let the monster out to play. He jumped forward, creating a few stepping cubes to reach the end of the crater, and continued walking down the street, heading for the palace. He could sense the Emberhorn giving orders to his people, yelling at them, asking for weapons and items from his vault. It did not matter. His Eternal Hunter perk was catching people inside of buildings on either side of him, filling him with stats. His **Vampire** had boosted them as well. With his new body he could handle the higher stats much better. He ability to nullify physical force on his body worked on force generated by his body as well. He could stifle his own strength, keep it on a manageable level.

Two groups of warriors came down the street, intending to flank him from both sides. Ryun didn't stop his walk, and as the groups came near one another, chaos erupted.

Ryun saw one of the groups charge across the street and smash into the other, cutting them down. He saw Nayra cut down a Monarch with her new spear, and with just a glance in Ryun's direction she headed deeper into the city toward her next target.

Ryun kept up with his walk. He sensed a group of warriors jumping over rooftops ahead of him, preparing an ambush. He pulled out a javelin, used **|Aim|**, and let it fly. The fast-moving projectile smashed into the building, sending debris flying in all directions as it destroyed the roof and killed or maimed the Last Ember Sect warriors. Debris showered the surrounding houses, a big chunk of stone smashing through a roof nearby and squashed a woman cowering inside. Regrettable, but he would not stay his hand, the deaths of his own people weighed more on his mind than the innocents of the enemy. Ryun didn't even slow down.

Another group of warriors was hiding behind a corner, their techniques ready to be unleashed on him. Ryun pointed his hand in their direction and used **{Void Beam}**. A beam of the darkest void tinged with violet blasted out of his hand and disintegrated the building's wall, boring holes through the people hiding behind it. Those who didn't get hit by the beam got buried by the collapse of the building.

Ryun continued walking. A blast of fire cut through the air, a lance of orange light, coming from one of the towers in the city. Ryun had, of course, sensed it while the enemy warriors were preparing the attack. He raised a hand and a layered wall of Qi sprung between him and the attack. The lance splashed across his wall, flames spreading around him and setting fire to the buildings around him.

Ryun pulled another javelin and moved some of his stats around. Then he dismissed his wall and swung. The bone in his arm cracked, and he grimaced at that, but at least his new body could handle the strain better, and he didn't pulverize it like last time. The javelin smashed into the tower, sending a shower of stone flying over the city, smashing into its buildings.

He walked through the fire around him and rounded a street, then walked into a crowd of people. They looked at him with eyes open wide, some screaming trying to get away, one over the other. None of them were on the

ground, none of them doing what he had told them to do. Ryun grimaced and kept walking, not slowing at all. He pulled Kagehime out and swung.

|Perfect Cut| split the first two rows of people, cutting them in half. Blood and gore spilled onto the streets and Ryun walked over their corpses. They were the ones who had followed a traitorous leader, the ones who had put him in the position to lead. They trusted him to protect them and see to their interests, just as Ryun was supposed to protect his own people. Hundreds, almost a thousand, of his warriors had died in Ven'oran, because of an agreement broken by the Emberhorn. Ryun had given them a choice, and they did not listen. He had no mercy for them, and none would stand in his way.

The people who survived his attack saw the dead, and those who couldn't get away dropped onto the ground, on their knees. Ryun frowned—that was not what he had asked, but figured that that would have to do. He sensed a few get down on their stomachs as he walked next to them, finally remembering his words, but he didn't even glance in their direction.

As he walked, killing those who stood in his way, he monitored the situation in the city with his sense. Anrosh and Nayra had done good; their plan had succeeded and they had control of the gates, preventing the warriors from outside the city from coming back in, and they had killed most of the warriors in the other barracks. The only warriors left in the city were those protecting the palace. They were the most powerful ones, and they were with the Emberhorn, of course.

Ryun rounded another corner and saw the gates of the palace in front of him. He felt himself smile as he continued walking forward. He loved this part.

ANROSH

The plan was simple enough. Ereclaw and Ryun had scouted Emberhill and the surrounding territory thoroughly. Most of the Last Ember Sect warriors were outside the city, in hunting parties and patrols which were

hunting down the monster-swarm packs that were coming into their territory. Another big chunk of them could typically be found protecting the farms and the farmers outside the wall every day.

Gaining entry to a city of several hundred thousand was easy. They ambushed a few patrols the day before their attack and disguised themselves as them. Getting through the gate had been trickier, but they had timed their approach to the cities with Ryun's proclamation. No one was looking to intently on warriors entering the city, wearing the same colors as they did, when an invader was threatening them. The moment Ryun landed, their attack began. Anrosh and fifty warriors under her command took the gate, closed it down to prevent more warriors from coming in, and then continued into the city, heading for the closest barracks.

They caught the warriors hurriedly arming themselves. It was a slaughter.

"Faster!" Anrosh roared as her warriors finished killing the last of the Last Ember Sect warriors. They needed to head toward the second barracks. They couldn't let them reach Ryun and interfere with his fight.

She and her warriors left the barracks and were met with a group of warriors led by a powerful-looking demasi. A pillar of fire filled her vision, a powerful attack intent on killing her and her warriors. Anrosh raised her hand and activated her Anchor. The air in front of them froze, a wall of ice coming into being as she used **{Frozen Shaping}**. The wall held, and she turned to her warriors.

"Take care of the others. Leave the leader to me."

She stepped forward as the wall collapsed and jumped forward. Her **{Frozen Armor}** protected her, and her two-handed sword glowed with frost from her **{Frost Ward}**. The leader expected her charge, and he raised his hands to block with his gauntlets. One stopped her sword, while the other punched at her midsection.

She let the attack land and her armor cracked. She put the man's strength at Peak Monarch. Perhaps that would've been a problem once, but she hadn't spent the last month doing nothing. The rewards from the swarm had improved everyone in the Twilight Melody sect. She used her Early Monarch perk, pushing as much Qi into it as she could. The **Absolute Cold**

Aura blasted in her immediate surroundings, the air becoming frigid. Her opponent's armor and clothes froze, the fire on his hands winked out, and his face grimaced in pain as his skin cracked and he closed his eyes as the liquid in them became ice, his eyelids cutting themselves open on the sharp ice beneath them and blood trailed down his cheeks only to freeze immediately.

Anrosh raised her sword, moved her Qi, and activated **{Glacial Onslaught}**. Her stats increasing, she activated **Fighter's Heart** and swung her sword down with **[Crescent]**. Her sword cleaved through the enemy's shoulder and down through his body, cleaving it at his hip. The two parts of his body split and fell to the ground, with no gore or a splatter of blood, only a hard thud as the wounds froze the moment they were exposed to air.

Anrosh saw her warriors finishing up the rest of the enemies.

She gathered them up, and they continued, heading deeper into the city.

NAYRA

Nayra used **{Haste}** to slip through the enemy warrior's guard, her golden spear opening a long cut on his forearm. The man pulled back his axe, trying to protect his face, but she stabbed anyway. The flat of his axe was in the way, but then her awakened weapon bent and twisted, stabbing down and into the man's throat.

She pulled the spear out as her **|Heat Sense|** warned her of incoming attacks. She turned and activated **[Dawn Dash]**, and bolts of fire passed through her body. She came out of the dash near a group of warriors, her **[Dawnfire Immolation]** making them flinch from the heat, meaning that their fire resistances weren't all that high. Her spear rose and she **|Swipe|**d, cutting their throats out. A sudden flash of heat next to her alerted her to an attack, but she was too slow, and her attacker too fast. A blade entered her shoulder as she twisted around and bashed the sword out with her shield, cutting the wound further. She didn't even pause as her **|Pain Tolerance|** muted the pain.

Her attacker was powerful. By the look of his uniform he was one of the leaders of this group, probably a Monarch. She looked at him through the golden flames that surrounded her, finding him to be engulfed in orange flames, his sword on fire. She triggered **Rapid Recovery** and healed her wound, then activated **Valkyrie's Swiftiness**. She dashed forward quickly, taking her opponent off guard. Her slightly oversized spear flashed forward and she stabbed at the enemy's throat. It was hard to control her strike, as the awakened spear was not meant to be used with one hand, but she had enough strength that she could manage it. She just wasn't used to fighting with such a longer spear.

The enemy blocked her strike and flashed into fire, blinking away. Nayra knew where he was going with her **|Heat Sense|**, and she jumped at that location with her **[Shimmering Burst]** before using **[Dawnfire Mirage]**. The spectral mirage left ahead of her, and just as the enemy appeared, it reached him. He panicked and blocked the mirage's strike, leaving himself open.

Nayra stabbed her spear in his gut, then pushed it through and got close enough to smash the blade of her shield into the man's throat. Blood spilled out of both of his wounds and she kicked him off the spear.

She looked around, seeing her sect's warriors fighting against the warriors inside the small room, and her **|Heat Sense|** told her that more were fighting in the hallways around her. She walked out of the room, killing another of the enemy's warriors on the way out. She walked through the hallway, stepping over the dead Last Ember Sect warriors and out into the courtyard.

Enemy reinforcements were coming: the guards who had been patrolling the city. Nayra spotted them before they had seen her. She took to the sky and then dropped with her **Valkyrie's Descent**. She smashed into their center, her spear stabbing into the ground and sending a shockwave of force around her. The enemies were thrown off their feet and she moved quickly to finish them.

She looked around, seeing her warriors spilling out of the barracks, their job done. And then a thunderous boom filled the city, and Nayra turned

to look at the hill in the center of the city. The gate was blasted off, debris falling all around the neighboring buildings.

Nayra glanced at her warriors, who were looking at it with their mouths open. "That was the signal! Let's go!"

They gathered and Nayra looked at a tall person among her warriors. He was completely covered with a large cloak and had a big hood raised over his head. Nayra saw him glance in her direction, and eyes that were pools of void looked at her from within the hood above a snout filled with wicked teeth.

Ereclaw inclined his head and then disappeared in a flash, heading toward the palace ahead of them. Nayra pointed her warriors toward the hill, killing any warriors heading that way as well.