

Immortal

Kri took a deep breath, then focused her willpower in the ways that her teacher taught her. It differed a lot from the way Ryun and Tali taught her. To them, willpower was a weapon to be wielded with impunity to crush the problems in front of you, to overwhelm. Zacharia taught that it was a subtler tool, that imposing your will on the world around you didn't need to be a struggle if you put yourself in line with what it wanted to do anyway. That understanding something lessened the amount of willpower needed to impose your will.

She let her willpower flow into one of her two passive skills, the **|Perfect Winter Touched Body: My Body, Stronger in Winter|**.

She took a deep breath, feeling the cold air fill her lungs and drew strength from it. She channeled some of her Qi through her talisman, her spiritual tool, that which was the **Inheritance of Death's Embrace**, like winter's coming. She focused her mind on her ultimate goal, not just the Aspect that she had now or the one she planned to take in the future, but the final result she was seeking. An Aspect that was more of a concept forming inside of her mind. Then she focused on cycling and advancing to the Peak Heavenly Realm.

Path Perk available: Forging of Body and Aspect	
Cold Transcendent	Your Qi channels and core are immune to all damaging effects of the

	<p>all cold related Essences. Your body has transcended and adapted to your Absolute Cold Qi. All Cold related Qi techniques and powers deal 50% more damage. Gain +20% to wisdom and +20% to endurance.</p>
<p>Ice Elemental</p>	<p>You are immune to all damaging effects of the Cold. Your body is now considered to be elemental, as long as your body has access to an influx of Cold related Qi or Essence, it will survive. Regeneration through vitality only possible in Cold abundant areas. Vital functions no longer necessary for survival. Physical changes, permanent increase of 20% to base endurance. Gain +20% to endurance and strength.</p>
<p>Marz—Embodiment of Winter</p>	<p>Combine all your body type Path Perks and gain a forged body that is a combination of them all. WARNING results 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.</p>

She had made the choice a long while ago, and didn't hesitate to make it now.

Cold washed over her body, entering every part of her until all that she could feel was the cold. She looked down at her pale blue skin and saw it turning pure white, saw Essence spreading over her skin, forming a thin layer of frost over her skin before it seeped under the skin.

Her mind was filled with quiet, a realm of silence and cold. Essence of Absolute Cold filled parts of her and others stilled, she felt the flow of her blood slow and heart stop beating. There were parts inside of her that remained empty, as if they were still waiting for something that would only come in the future. For a moment she felt her Core touch the Plane of Absolute Cold, then reach for something else, another Plane where stillness ruled. But it was gone before she could even try and glimpse at it.

Then the sensations retreated and she sighed in relief. She blinked and brought her screens to her eyes. She had lost her **True Body**, **Body Enhancement**, and **Ruler's Eyes** perks. She didn't know how she looked just yet, but that could wait. She turned her eyes to the new perk.

Marz—Embodiment of Winter	Your body is forged by your aspect and your path. You are able to increase and manifest the effects of winter according to your will. Your body is immune to the negative effects of Winter-related Essences. Heat-related effects are anywhere from 90% less effective against you depending to 90% more effective against you depending on the dominant Essence in
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	<p>your surrounding. You can draw in any Winter-related Essence in order to restore any facet of yourself (stamina, mental, will, Qi, regeneration). Your Qi regeneration increases depending on the temperature and lack of movement. All Winter-related powers are 25% more effective. Physical changes. You gain +25% to wisdom and +60% to endurance. All things fall to Winter, eventually.</p>
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She closed her eyes in relief, it wasn't a disaster. She had tried not to think about it, but knowing that there was a chance that she hadn't calculated enough and made a mistake was always there.

"Everything good?" Her teacher asked from nearby.

Kri glanced in his direction. "Yes, everything is good."

He nodded. "That was very... interesting. I could feel you connecting with more than one plane."

Kri grimaced. "For a moment, it slipped by me."

"**Stillness** I assume?"

She nodded. "I didn't expect to touch it. I've never done much with **Stillness**, though it is part of my overall philosophy."

"It was informative nevertheless," he said. "I am certain that I can help you for the next part."

She looked up and met his eyes. "Really?"

He smiled. “Of course, now that I know what advancement looks like. I am confident that I will not interfere with the process when I touch my plane. Though, are you sure that you want that?”

She straightened, she had never been more certain about anything in her life. She looked around at the formations, ready to be activated.

“Let’s start,” she said in lieu of an answer.

Zacharia’s expression sobered, and he came closer to sit across from her just outside the ring her formations made around her. Then she felt his presence fade until she could barely even tell that he was there.

“Whenever you are ready,” he said.

Kri sat on the ground and started cycling the crystals from her ring, pushing her core. She focused on trying to deepen it with each rotation, almost painfully scrapping against the edges of her core as she pulled in Essence.

The effort was significant, but mundane. It didn’t take her long to finish all of her cycles and get ready to advance, the option for it was there, just as she had known it would be.

With one last look at her teacher, she inclined her head and activated the formations. The air around her was filled with the Essences of **Absolute Cold** and **Stillness**. She reached out and started to pull them into her core even as the formations forced them to mingle. She couldn’t merge them together, she didn’t yet have her second Aspect, but she was simply preparing the way for the future.

Then she felt her teacher’s will spread out and engulf everything. He wasn’t a Cultivator, so he could not control the Essence freely, instead he

just leaned on it. It had a similar effect of forcing the two Essences to press together as they pulled into her core.

Kri focused her mind and touched at the center of her core, the connection to her own plane. Then she peered through, opening up the connection to the **Absolute Cold**.

As soon as she had done that, several things happened. Her teacher used a power that shook the world around her, then with a swipe of his arm that turned into a blade he carved open a line in space. A rift opened up, a direct gateway to another plane, and from it she felt **Stillness**. The Essence spilled out, and everything grew still.

Then, her teacher reached out through himself, touching the plane of **Time**. She felt its effect battle that of **Stillness**, one wanting to continue always forward, and the other to stand still. Her teacher's will rose so high that Kri's thoughts went blank for a moment, and then all ideas about Time winked out as he halted the River of Time, as she had asked.

She had been drawn to his Aspect, but in many ways she sought the opposite of it. Now, as the three Essences mingled, she pulled them in her core and cycled one more time. The **Absolute Cold's** desire to pull heat and energy from everything, the **Stillness'** desire to stand still, and finally the instance of **Time** held frozen still by the man who created its path.

Kri's Paths were the Path of the Final End, and the Path of the Empty Dominion. One which led to the End of things, that her first teacher had taken to its ultimate conclusion with Oblivion. The Path of the Empty Dominion, which her second teacher used to banish everything from the Sky and dominate.

Through guidance of her third teacher, she had come to understand that she did not seek that ultimate End, but the softer, though no less

harsh, more natural conclusion that came with the coming of Winter. That Winter had dominion over everything it touched, that it turned the world empty.

Merging her two Aspects into Winter eventually would be a great step for her, and she knew it in her bones that all she would've had to do was continue as she was. That even without any real effort she would've gotten it. But she wanted more. She wanted to establish rules for her Aspect, to pour all that she felt inside into an Aspect, all the things that she felt she couldn't say.

And why settle for Winter? It was great and powerful, but it was passing. Winter always led to Spring. She needed more, something greater. A concept that she had heard of in stories. Perhaps it didn't exist, or perhaps she would will it into existence. It didn't matter.

She finished her cycle, her willpower set on a concept of a Cold dominion without end. Of the passing of life into endless slumber. The Dominion and the Final End of the **Eternal Winter**.

She advanced.

Her Qi surged through her body, but also from outside of it. **Absolute Cold, Stillness, and Time**, all touched her body as it evolved. Her mind ground to a halt as she felt everything about her being torn apart then put back together. At the edge of her senses she felt something grand, the goal she was running toward. The Plane of that which she sought, the **Eternal Winter**.

She reached for it, but couldn't find purchase, it was so great, and she so small. It was too soon. But she felt that vastness touch her, and knew that eventually she would glimpse it, then grasp it, that eventually she would understand it.

The world outside shuddered, and then everything went back to how it used to be.

She started breathing again, feeling as if she had touched on something that few had ever even thought about.

She opened her eyes and saw her teacher's kind smile.

"Thank you," she said.

He inclined his head and she turned her attention to her notifications.

Reinforcement Bonus
Congratulations! You have reinforced your mind and gained new insight, you gain +100 to intelligence and +100 to wisdom.

Path Perk available: Immortality	
Rebirth in Frost	Your body has adapted to survive in a cold environment You gain immortality. In the case of death, your soul will anchor itself to your dead body for a period of time. If your body is brought to a place of intense cold and left there for a period of seven

	<p>days it will regenerate and you will come back to life. The amount of time your soul will remain anchored and the amount of body needed for your soul to anchor itself depends on your tiers of power; current:75% and 8 days. Destruction of the last piece of the body will release the soul from its anchor and send it to the Ethereal realm. Gain +10% to vitality and +10% to endurance.</p>
Rebirth	<p>Upon death, your soul will latch on to the closest recently conceived child that still does not have a formed soul. You will be born anew and regain the memories of your previous life slowly over the course of the first fifteen years of life. Upon gaining access to Essence, you will gain ten percent of your previous stats. You will not be able to advance, your previous power will return to you slowly over the course of the next ten years. Once you reach the point of your previous power, you will be able to advance again from that point. Dying before you reach fifteen years of age will result in your soul being sent to the Ethereal Realm. Gain +10% to vitality and +10% to intelligence.</p>

<p>Winter's Envoy— Winter's Heart</p>	<p>Your body is tied to the concept of Winter, you no longer age. Upon death your body will fall apart into your base Essences, rapidly bringing on the arrival of Winter in the territory you are in. Your Soul will remain remain in the Ethereal side of that territory, and you will be able to reconstitute your body and return as long as the winter in the territory persists for longer than a month. Otherwise you will continue to the afterlife. Gain +15% to wisdom and +15% to intelligence. Even in death, I bring the Winter.</p>
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The reinforcement bonus was interesting, but not what she was really curious about. The choice of immortality was really no choice at all. She made her choice and felt it rush through her, solidifying her soul and her perk in a pact.

Only after it was over did she allow herself to smile. At last she had done it, she was an Immortal.