

Selia

In all of her life, Selia had never seen a perk stone. She had never heard about one either, everyone agreed that such things didn't exist. Yet here it was in Ryun's hands. His words spoke of a price, of being bonded to him for life. It was a price that was too high for her to pay, or it would be in any other situation. He was right, they were losing, and soon they might not even be able to retreat. She glanced at Erdania, her great love and she could see her death. No matter the support from the walls, from the warriors around her, or from her towering **Evolved Form**, she couldn't hold the line for much longer.

The horde of the monsters was overwhelming her, and the other monsters that matched her size were pushing her back. They were all in danger. She turned her head back and met Ryun's eyes. She didn't really have a choice; she couldn't turn away anything that might help them turn the tide. If this was going to grant her a perk similar to what he possessed... it was no choice at all.

She picked the sphere up and accepted the perk.

The white sphere in her hand broke apart and a cloud of energy surged inside her. In one instant everything went dark. A massive pressure started to build up inside of her, a presence that was unlike anything that she had ever felt overwhelmed her. Images flashed inside her mind, a thousand, a million, countless different sights. Small orbs hanging in the dark, with tiny points of light surrounding them. A large monster of black fur and red eyes looking at her, a sense of knowing and belonging filled her. It threatened to shatter her, but then it all settled. And she was changed forever.

"I've forgotten what this felt like," Selia blinked as she heard Ryun's voice inside her head. As she realized that she could feel him there standing next to her. That she could sense his emotions; the determination, the sadness, acceptance, and... a lot more that she couldn't quite identify at the moment.

She didn't have the time to adapt to the strangeness, to think on what she had just done, what they had just done. Instead, she pulled the new notification to her eyes.

Eternal Hunters: Twin Aspects of True Death Essence integrated.

Unique Perk gained:

—**Eternal Huntress: Scythe**

Perk evolution possible.

Additional Essence utilized.

Eternal Huntress: Scythe
(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 one another regardless of the distance. You may sense your other half regardless of distance. You gain the ability to sense death. You gain the **Presence of the Eternal Huntress** Aura, when active, you gain **Death Mark**: Anything with a soul killed by you has its soul completely destroyed and returned to oblivion. Nearby beings based on your intentions have +25% to all power requirements and they suffer -25% to their speed, half of the drained speed is granted to you, the other half to the Reaper.

She looked at her new perk and knew that she had gained something unique in all of the Infinite Realm. Her eyes found Ryun's, and she knew that only the two of them had something like this.

"Hm..." Ryun started. "We don't have the time for me to explain things, I hope that you can trust me, for a while at least."

She had just let him inside her mind, she could feel him and she knew that he could feel her just as much. There didn't seem to be any point in her not trusting him at this point. She nodded, and he explained what he wanted.

Selia did as he asked, and sent out orders, gathering some of her warriors around them on the wall. She watched as he made constructs of his void around his body, fashioning what looked to be an elaborate brace for his entire body. She focused and activated her **Evolved Form: Arkhazh**. Her skin turned silver, her horns grew larger and her tail longer, her claws extended and darkened, but the biggest changes took place inside of her. Her conduits and core changed, a thousand different lines spread through her body and she felt her power increase.

"You ready?" Ryun asked.

Selia braced herself and had a few of her guards stand behind her in case that it was necessary. Then, she nodded her head.

He grinned at her.

"Now."

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Ryun

When Selia used the sphere, Ryun was reminded of so many things. Having another person in your head was an experience that he doubted many could understand. He realized just how much he missed the sensation. But it was completely different to how it was with Melody. Selia felt nothing like her, her emotions felt a lot more controlled, but he could tell that she was concerned for the people around them and for Erdania. He felt the love that she had for her partner and it made him feel strange. He had never felt something like that. He didn't have the time to ponder and get used to things,

so he pulled his notification up. Quickly he read and saw that something had changed with the perk. He had felt the similar surge of power when she had used it to what he had felt when he first got the power from the Reaper.

The perk now affected people based on Ryun's intentions, instead of everyone around him. It was a small change, but important one for them, especially now. It seemed that the perk could improve, he had always suspected. The Reaper and the Scythe had been Eternal ranked beings, but his perk had only been mythic. It seemed that the more powerful both he and the other holder of the perk were, the more power they could access.

He pushed his mind from those thoughts and spoke to Selia, telling her plan.

She thankfully accepted, and quickly they were surrounded by her sect warriors, a few hundred all around them as they stood on the raised rampart. They were still throwing fire down into the arena, but Ryun didn't pay them much attention. He used his **{Void Shape}** and fashioned walls around himself, keeping his legs and body fixed. He pointed his arms at the oncoming horde at one of the large monsters heading toward Erdania and fixed them in place. He had spent a long-time training to handle his stats when they reached great heights. His **|Enduring Trained Body|** his **|Greater Coordination|** and his **Unyielding** perk all helped, as did his **Mu** body. He hadn't yet tested it since he gained his new **Inner Refinement** perk, but with it, he should feel 50% less effects from stat impairment. It could only help, since he had gotten very good at handling it already. He didn't know how it was going to react with the other part of the perk added into the mix.

Once they were ready Ryun dismissed his avatar and then took a deep breath.

"Now," he said, and activated his perk.

Presence of the Eternal Hunter billowed out of him, just as the **Presence of the Eternal Huntress** billowed out of Selia. He heard her gasp, just as he fought his own reaction. He was used to this, but it was the first time for her.

With the hundred warriors around them, his stats increased by an average of 10,000 each: putting all of his stats at around 13k mark. It was an

insane amount that was just over what he could handle without issues for a shorter time, but it wasn't yet so much that it would crush him like it did before. He activated his mantle and pushed all of his bonus into his wisdom and intelligence. With this many stats he couldn't risk not being able to control his power. Both stats increased by over six thousand, bringing his total in wisdom and intelligence to 22,433 and 16,955 respectively.

He heard the people around him exclaim in various ways, from surprise to horror, but no one moved out of their auras.

He sensed Selia gather herself, and then she moved her hand. Her Qi flowed out of her in a storm, and she created spears all around her. A moment later they multiplied, hundreds, no, thousands of spears came into being all above them. Each the exact same copy of the spears she formed with her Qi. They were almost pieces of art. His sense could feel their detail, their durability and sharpness. They were impressive. Selia did something more, and the spears vibrated in Ryun's sense.

Ryun moved his Qi and prepared his own technique. Then, Selia launched her spears. Thousands of them flying through the air and at the monsters. Ryun, after only a moment of hesitation to admire the display, followed. Selia's spears hit the monsters, one spear each, killing them in an instant. He unleashed **{Void Beam}** one from each hand. They lashed out and struck one of the monsters, disintegrating holes through them after only a few seconds where before he could only scratch them in the same time. The monster died, and he focused again, shaping his avatar with his increased wisdom.

The avatar formed next to him, and Ryun focused on his **{Void Shaping}**. He created the base of a pillar beneath the avatar as it prepared a technique. Then he had the platform grow at high speed, in essence launching the avatar through the air. It crashed into the arena, far away from the stands and Erdania. Its landing sent a loud crash through the arena that nearly overcome the sounds of the battles. But it was only a few moments later, when the avatar released the fully charged **{Staggered End}** that everything seemed to stop.

There was no sound of an explosion, only a large sphere expanding and consuming everything. Three waves of Void Qi swallowed the arena and the

monsters. A fully charged **{Staggered End}** ripped through everything, all types of monsters were disintegrated the instant the wave hit them. He continued to fire, while his avatar shaped a step beneath itself and fired beams as well. His stats soared higher, with the thousands that he had killed, his **Vampire** perk taking their stats for his own. His Qi was getting close to depletion, but Ryun still had Essence filling his core.

Selia repeated her previous display, summoning thousands of spears in just a few seconds. Within a short period of time, the two of them had killed enough for the warriors fighting below to get some breathing room. Still, it wasn't enough, hundreds of thousands, millions maybe even, filled the arena.

Then, with his sense he noticed the arrival of four new people in the middle of their formation.

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Zach

The fight to the teleporters had been surprisingly easy. Some of the monsters had made their way into the tunnels beneath the arena, but not many. Zach and Naha had been the ones to fight along with three other wardens that had come with them, since the Warden Commander obviously wasn't in any state to do it. Her perks however, protected both of them. Just being in her presence boosted their stats.

"Here," Bera said as she walked over to the control panel. "We have charge for... twelve teleportations."

Warden Commander grimaced and looked around. "Zach, you and your partner are coming with us then. The four of us, that leaves us eight more. The rest of you get out, help with the evacuation of the city."

They had already abandoned the wall above them. Warden Commander had ordered everyone to fight their way to the Healing Building so that they had a safe place to escape from the arena.

"Do it quickly, we don't have much time," Yirrel said as she stepped on the platform.

Bera manipulated the controls, then hurried to step on the platform as it lit up. A moment later they were somewhere else. They arrived on top of the wall, surrounded by warriors from the sects. Immediately Zach felt weaker, and a new notification appeared in his vision.

You are in the **Presence of the Eternal Hunter** and the **Presence of the Eternal Huntress.**

-25% to all regenerative effects

-25% to all stats

+25% to all resource requirements

-25% to speed

Death Mark

Zach didn't even have the time to wonder at what it was; weapons and powers turned on them immediately. Some even attacked. Yirrel waved a hand, and a spherical shield blocked the dozen or so attacks. Zach then saw that the source of these two auras were the two people standing on the ramparts.

A yell stopped everyone, and then a woman on top of the rampart turned and looked at them. She was a demasi, with silver skin and blood red eyes, her horns long and metallic looking. Next to her stood a human that had his back turned to them, his hands pointed at the arena and two beams of black and violet firing down. He didn't turn.

The woman saw Yirrel and her expression immediately changed.

"Yirrel, you have a plan?" she asked, the blue aura around her disappeared

"I do, Selia. We have a plan to close the portal. But I am going to need you," Yirrel then glanced at the back of the human. Zach already knew who he was. "Both of you, and anyone else strong that you have."

Ryun stopped his attacks, and then the red aura vanished. He turned around, the strange black constructs around him shattering. His eyes met

Zach's and for a moment there was no one else around them. In Zach's mind he was back on Earth, staring at him among the bodies of his friends. He could never forget, but moving past was so hard. He felt Naha's hand on his, and he turned his eyes away from him.

"Tell me your plan," the demasi woman, Selia said. And the Warden Commander spoke.

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Zenker

His armor was cracked, light leaking out of it from all the damage. He rolled to the side as the massive monster swiped its claws at him. It was a monster made out of shadow, the third one that Hastur had formed. Its form was detailed even though it seemed to be all painted in a single color. Zenker couldn't see any identifying signs above it, but he knew it. It was the **Elder Crocodile King** the monster that he had killed only a few years back. The two monsters before this one had been monsters that he had killed before too, he hadn't been sure before, but he was certain now. Hastur was somehow pulling from Zenker's memories and giving form to the monsters that he had fought in the past.

They had all the powers that they had in the past, but Zenker was much stronger now. His Image trembled around him as he jumped over the shadow monster's attack, and then he unleashed his **|I Rend A Path|**. The Image around sharpened his attack, changing to the jagged peaks of a mountain range he once traversed. His claws pierced through the scales that he had once been unable to scratch. The monster split in half.

He landed on the ground and dashed forward, aiming straight for Hastur. As he got closer, his vision danced, voices whispered in his head and he knew that he was under a mental assault. It didn't last for long before he managed to shrug it off, but in that time Hastur created two more shadow monsters, both his previous opponents. Zenker grimaced and jumped back, getting some distance from the large wyrm's acid spit.

He didn't know for how long he had fought, it seemed days almost. But the landscape had changed completely. He had cracked the earth and destroyed sand dunes. They were fighting in a crater created by one of his clashes with Hastur. He couldn't close the portal, not anymore. He had lost track of his wand amongst the horde of monsters, perhaps it had even been destroyed in the fighting. The horde had conquered the fort, and had quickly started to take it over. A strange type of monsters was covering the walls with black ichor-like substance, and large monsters that clearly carried eggs hid behind the walls.

Monsters were still passing through the portal, now running around the battle between Zenker and Hastur, after they or who ever commanded them figured out that they couldn't do anything. Zenker killed them just as a side effect of his battle. There was too many of them, millions, more, he couldn't count them. It was all so much worse than they had ever imagined. This wasn't a single wave that they could conquer. It was an invasion force, with generals, with a leader, with the ability to grow its armies and use tactics. And there were more of these domes scattered everywhere.

He knew that their only chance was to kill Hastur, and he had to try. Yet, he couldn't get close, and every time he did the monster pushed him back. Hastur's attacks hit hard, but Zenker had a suspicion that physical prowess wasn't his main strength. The mental attacks were constant, and building, and Zenker knew that he was in a battle against time.

He had been pulling different weapons from his armory, trying to find something that would work. Before he could do it again, the two shadow monsters attacked, and forced him to retreat. But his mind never stopped thinking, trying to find a way to kill the greatest threat to the Infinite Realm in all of its history.

He only hoped that Yirrel found a way to close the portal, because if she didn't... the core would be hit with an invasion that they were not prepared to face.