

Ayin

Nothing, a No-thing, an existence beyond anything—everything.

It called to him and he accepted. His core shuddered and the two conduits reaching to two different planes blended together, reaching to something else entirely. It was related, of course it was, Void, Stillness, Destruction, Death, True Death, Darkness even. All these things that had somehow touched his life. The death that had filled his life before the Infinite Realm. Zach's suppression that had robbed him of his power for so long. The darkness as the result of his blindness. The Void that he had accepted into his being. The True Death that was now part of him as the Wolf of the End. The Stillness, a state of being that he had sought without really realizing why—an existence where nothing mattered. They were stepping stones to something beyond. The desire to see stories, to witness ends of journeys. It all came with the understanding that some day, some time, all of this would end. And he wanted to live to see it.

His core connected, in that moment of defiance. Of refusal to die and see his end come before all others. He connected and touched with another plane, a realm that was a concept made manifest. A realm of nothing. The conduit in his core slid open and something poured in. No, nothing poured in. Both? It erased what was inside, it filled him and yet didn't, it made him feel empty and filled at the same time. A paradox of existence and non-existence. He glimpsed into this realm and his mind broke. Again and again, into pieces that could barely comprehend themselves. This realm refused him, he was of the Essence, of matter and being, and even though it extended its hand, it still tried to push him out. He didn't belong. As if he wasn't worthy enough, as if he couldn't understand. And yet, a part of him did understand. The part that was the Eternal Hunter, one half of the Aspect of True Death, the Wolf of the End. And as one part of him fell asleep another woke, fully for perhaps the first time.

Death was transition, an end of one life and the beginning of another type of existence, but True Death? That was more. Still a transition, but from existence into the nothingness that came before and will come after.

And now at the edge of the cliff, as his soul was threatened, as he faced that nothingness and True Death, he saw into this realm and beheld... nothing, it was an absence of all. Essence was... was there even Essence here? He couldn't grasp it, couldn't quite make his mind understand. There were secrets here that he wasn't equipped to know, to understand. And a part of him made him certain that this was still part of reality, of the Framework, of all existence. Somehow, perhaps a key part of it all.

Understanding teased him. It was there, just at the tip of his fingers, just beyond the nothingness that surrounded him. But he couldn't reach it, and that made him... sad. It pained him, made him want to cry and scream and rage all at once. But something whispered from the nothingness, from the **Oblivion**. Something that promised that he would know its secrets, in time. His mind was thrown out of the plane of the **Oblivion**, and back into the real world.

His core was transforming, filling with the emptiness, the nothingness that was **Oblivion**, it transformed into Qi. It seeped into his body and into his soul, and he felt it transform everything that it touched. For a moment he panicked, thought about fighting it, but then he remembered. The perks that he had been gaining along the way.

Eternal Qi Control Master—Endless Threads: *You weave endlessly, holding all until the end.*

True Body—Untethered: *You walk alone, untethered from the natural laws of the universe, bringing the end to those in your way.*

Inner Refinement—Void Chassis: *You are built of Void.*

Astral Eyes—Sights Unseen: *You thrive in darkness. And now your blind eyes see what others cannot.*

Void Aura—Oblivion's Persistence: *Oblivion Endures.*

Titanic Abyssal Core—Void Well: Nothingness and incomprehension rule here.

Wolf of the End—True Death of All: *You will see the end of all.*

Others too, but all were the same. End, Void, Darkness, and Oblivion. This had always been the way, the Path of the Final End. Oblivion.

He was changing, his perks were changing. He could feel it, and he could see them flashing in the corner of his eye. Wanting to be called and read. He couldn't, his body remade itself, healed, and... something else was there. Something new, and his will grabbed hold and pulled it out.

The power filled him, it sang to him of silence at the end of all. It was nothing, and it sought to bring about nothing. As instinct, it came to him, and he reached out with his hand. His ideal was still active, it still showed him the threads that filled the monster and all of its actions, that filled Ryun himself too. He looked for a thread, somehow knowing that he needed that, and found it. A thick line going through the core of this monster, this being of stone. A thread filled with light, with the Essence of Stone, a history of a world that is long since gone. Of creatures that this one was the last, the greatest of. An ancient world and life. Growth beneath the stones of a world that dwarfed others. Of a reality with no sun, of battles and scars and glory. A thread of a life.

He knew what it was, the thread that represented the existence of **The One That Sings Of Stone**. He grasped with his hand, touched the monster's flesh, and let the power seep out of him. It touched the thread and all of it went black. The reality whined around him, it cried in sorrow and despair. It withered and decayed, what ones was, made no more as the power of Oblivion itself touched it. He knew the name of this power, it whispered to him as he let it work through him. **Ayin** followed his will.

And then the world returned, and he was on the ground, in the cavern made of stone, and no signs of the monster or their battle remained. Tali was above, and she quickly landed and changed in her normal form as he rose to his feet.

"Ryun... what... what were we doing?" She held her head, as if in pain.

It took him a moment to understand. What he had done affected her, it was still active, still doing something. He reached inside to **Ayin**, and he released the parts of it that influenced her.

She frowned, her eyes blinking as memories returned to her.

"Ryun, what did you do? Where is—"

“—It is no more,” Ryun said, and knew it to be true. He had taken all aspects of it away, made them not. But he returned its impact, the memories of what it had done, its history, so that Tali could remember.

Tali pulled out something, a gemstone that gave off faint Light Essence, letting her see. He saw her eyes widen as she looked at him and then after a few moments she spoke.

“How?” Tali asked slowly, her eyes wary. He frowned, something was bothering her, obviously.

“What Kri did, I... managed to touch a plane of an Aspect,” Ryun said.

“What she did was nothing like this,” Tali said slowly. “You are changed Ryun.”

He frowned again, then raised his hand and looked at it. He saw... nothing. A hole in the realm of Essence shaped like his hand. He moved it and the Essence flowed around it, as if bent out of the way, not interacting with him at all. No... there was a layer, a thin layer of... something Essence like, which made out the surface of his skin, he saw light bounce off it. He didn't know what it was, or what it meant, so he decided to pull up his notifications. Going through them from the first one that arrived.

Aspects combination initiated.

The Stillness of the Void

Aspect acquired.

Perk upgrade initiated... canceled.

Aspect evolution detected.

Reintegration of Aspect initiated.

Void—removed.

Stillness—removed.

Oblivion Aspect gained.

Perk upgrade initiated...

Insightful knowledge acquired

You peered into the deeper law and the concept of an Essence. You glimpsed the truth behind it.

Great Feat accomplished

Rewards:

—**Personal Feat: Glimpse of Aspect** Title

—**Ayin** Title and Grand Perk

Titles		
Personal Feat: Glimpse of Aspect	Glimpse at the core concepts of your Aspect and gain a deeper understanding.	+5% to all stats, (Aspect Improvement) 50 Celestial Essence
Ayin	Your achievement, drive, or effort is recognized.	+100 to base wisdom, Ayin (Grand Perk), 10 Celestial Essence

Oblivion (9) (Aspect Perk)	Your Qi passively enhances your body with the concept of Oblivion. You are immune to any direct tracking or scrying methods. Any attacks against you will lose a portion of their power based on the disparity between you and the source. You are immune to directly influencing movement restriction effects. +25% to vitality, +50% to wisdom and intelligence.
----------------------------	--

Ayin (Grand Perk)	Tap into the source of pure Oblivion. Once every 100 years, erase anything that you are touching from existence with all or any aspects of it as you desire. Willpower can reduce or oppose this effect. Can only be used while the Conclusion Dominance is active.
-------------------	--

Then there was the notification about their scenario.

<p>Congratulations for defeating The Den of the Ancient One scenario! You can leave the scenario whenever you wish. Rewards given based on your performance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> –Guardian of Worldstone (Territory upgrade) –Shrine of Worldstone (Territory upgrade) –Palace of Worldstone’s Memory (Territory upgrade) –Vault of the One That Sings Of Stone (Territory upgrade) –50,000 Immortal Essence –Title: Superiority
--

Superiority	Defeat the One That Sings Of Stone in The Den of the Ancient One scenario, while not yet at the peak of a focus and with less than 5 people attempting.	+100 to base strength, vitality, wisdom +10% to all stats, 5,000 Immortal Essence
-------------	--	---

There was more, some of his perks had changed, but he pushed that all aside and looked at another window that asked him if he wanted to leave the scenario. He mentally pressed an option, and they were let out of the scenario’s realm.

He turned to look at Tali and then shared everything with her.

He remained silent as she read through the many windows, and then finally once she was done, she just shook her head.

“So unfair.”

* * *

They walked out of the cave system, and onto the surface.

“Your cracks have changed color, probably the color of Oblivion. Black and silver, but there is still some violet there, at the edges.”

Ryun didn't particularly care about it, he couldn't see color as others do anyway. What he wanted to know was what Oblivion even was. He couldn't see it like he could Essence, and even his Qi was somehow different. And yet, it was there, only invisible. He didn't think that the Framework would allow anything outside of its purview, the same as it had assimilated the Aspects of True Death. But Oblivion felt like it was... part of it all, only he didn't yet understand it fully.

Regardless, he had time to think about it all and see how he had changed. It would be a while before they reached their destination, the Dragon's Heart Sect territory.

“You do realize that we came here so that you could train and get accustomed to your new power,” Tali said. “And we are leaving with you needing to do everything again from scratch.”

Ryun bowed his head. He wasn't going to complain, he nearly died. But they would have to train and explore his new... everything, on the way. They couldn't miss the gathering.

“We'll figure it out,” Ryun told her.

He couldn't wait for it.