

The Mech 5061

Chapter 5061 Mastering The Building Blocks Of Cultivation

After Ves deconstructed the paths of a mech pilot and a mech designer with the help of the teachings of his mother, he felt as if he had fully pierced the truth of these two professions.

He no longer held as many doubts and uncertainties towards these two special cultivation methods as before.

The fog had lifted!

Ves had the illusion that he had stepped outside of the box of mechs and taken a good look at it from the perspective of an outside observer.

This provided him with many benefits. He not only understood a lot better what it took for mech pilots and mech designers to advance up the ranks, but he could also devise more specific solutions that could substantially promote their growth!

He already had a powerful tool in his arsenal.

"Mother?"

"Yes, baby?"

The cyborg cat's expression twitched when his mother referred to him as a baby. He was already a father himself! Just because he was currently occupying the form of a diminutive cat didn't mean he had regressed into a child!

"Ahem, I would like to ask how my companion spirits tie into this picture. From what I have observed, my companion spirits have somehow become just enough separated from their principles that they can easily follow other cultivation paths without too many restrictions. I mean, Ketis has somehow managed to become a swordmaster and a Journeyman Mech Designer at the same time. I am pretty sure that is supposed to happen under normal circumstances."

His mother directed a proud expression at the cyborg cat.

"While I do not entirely approve of your decision to conduct a dangerous procedure on yourself and others, I cannot deny your results. You have truly created a new and wonderful means to engage in multiple cultivation methods at the same time, including ones that ordinarily conflict with each other. The companion spirits that you are able to make are also much more talented in most forms of cultivation due to their immaterial forms. The Five Scrolls Compact would literally allow every other human to master the secrets of your companion spirits. Compared to ordinary organisms, companion spirits share a closer resemblance to True Gods, so they will experience fewer barriers in cultivation as they can mitigate the lack of talent."

"There's more to them than that." Veronica spoke. "Back in the Red Ocean, I have noticed that every design spirit and companion spirit is inherently able to absorb and draw strength from the power of heaven and earth. They are all natural cultivators, am I correct? They don't need to learn or invent any specific cultivation methods. They can just grow stronger by following their natural instincts."

Cynthia frowned a bit. "That is... somewhat correct. I do not understand the nature of your created spirits too well. Remember what I have told you. Natural cultivation is convenient to those who have access to it, but it is rarely the best, strongest or most effective means to become a True God.

My personal prediction is that it may be easy for companion spirits to grow stronger by relying solely on natural cultivation, it will also provide the least benefits and may not give them much hope of breaking past more challenging bottlenecks. It is always better for natural cultivators to take fate in their own hands and practice a more structural and better-designed cultivation method."

Veronica agreed with this sentiment. Nothing came for free. The good stuff always demanded a greater price.

"I will take that into account when I work on my own plans."

Cynthia leaned back and relaxed her posture. She looked satisfied now that she had imparted Ves with a clear understanding of the high-level processes of cultivation.

"Since you are interested in helping your creations grow stronger by themselves through cultivation, I believe you may benefit from taking a look at existing examples. I can share a selection of different cultivation methods to you. Their quality may be mixed, but they are highly reliable and have proven their effectiveness for many generations."

She waved her glowing arms, causing the air in front of her to stir and shake.

The silvery cat sitting close by widened her eyes as she saw entire paper scrolls and books materialize into existence!

This was an actual conversion of energy to matter without the use of any sophisticated technological products!

Materialization may be an impossible feat to Ves, but it was a common ability for every True God!

Once she created the scrolls and tomes out of thin air, Cynthia gently waved her hand, causing her brand-new creations to drop in front of the avatar of her son.

"Feel free to examine these texts."

The cyborg cat immediately pounced. As soon as she unrolled the first scroll, she quickly attempted to read, only to encounter a major problem right away.

"Uh, mom?"

"Yes, my child?"

"What the hell is this language? Why does this alphabet look so alien? I can't read any of this stuff!"

"Ah, I forgot. Let me correct that for you." Cynthia waved her hand and magically caused the foreign texts to change into standard human language. "Do note that it is highly Inadvisable for anyone to practice these cultivation methods. Translations can never perfectly convey the original context and meaning of different languages, especially when there is an enormous separation of time and place. Many cultivation methods are also adapted to specific environments, so the examples I have given to you are unlikely to work as well in Messier 87. The power of heaven and earth over there is shaped by the galaxy's unique circumstances, so it is much more foreign and alien than what used to be the case in the Milky Way."

These were serious warnings and immediately doused any thoughts about making his clansmen practice any of these ancient cultivation methods.

Just like how the mechs designed 200 years ago would never be able to compete against modern machines, the methods contained within the created scrolls and books should be treated as historical antiques!

They only held research value to Ves. He may not be able to use any of these methods directly, but he could learn from their approaches and design his own ones!

That was clearly his mother's intention when she created these texts out of thin air.

Minutes passed by as Ves quickly skimmed through all of the texts at a rapid speed. His learning and data processing capabilities were extremely high, so he had no problem keeping up despite flipping through papers so quickly.

The cyborg cat's expression grew odder and odder. The concepts, methods and other demands mentioned in these texts evoked strong reactions from her. The sheer amount of superstitions and silly beliefs contained in these cultivation methods drove her to madness!

"I see now why you hold them in so much contempt." Veronica spoke. "Many of these cultivation methods either respect heaven as the ultimate authority or try to defy its restrictions at any cost. There are some cultivation methods that try to do both at the same time!"

Heaven played such an enormous role for many cultivation methods from many eras that all of those delusional cultivators likely created and strengthened an abstract god of their own making!

Ves briefly recalled getting in touch with the living consciousness of both the Milky Way and the Red Ocean during an odd mental trip.

Had both of these galaxies become alive after being used as stand-ins for the abstract concept of 'heaven'?

His mother could obviously explain a lot more about this subject, but she chose to smile and remain silent.

"I don't fully understand why these cultivators have to make their artistic conceptions so complicated." He said. "One of them speaks about creating an entirely new universe inside your own body. From creating a body of space to forming stellar objects such as planets and stars, how much effort and resources is needed to form an entire star system?"

"This is one of the strongest cultivation methods that I have shared with you." Cynthia responded. "Think about what it means to have the power of a galaxy at your disposal. Not only can you launch a physical attack with the combined mass of all of those heavy masses, you can also fuel your own cultivation and abilities with the energy produced by your own personal star."

That... actually sounded a bit clever. If not for the fact that this cultivation method demanded an insane amount of resources in order to progress, Ves would have felt tempted to experiment with it himself!

"What's this about building a purple palace?" Veronica asked as her metallic paw tapped an unrolled scroll. "Why do you need to build a palace in your mind step by step and also worry about how many pillars are cracked and so on. Can't you just fix them up if they get damaged?"

"The construction of a purple palace is a cultivation tool that can structurally enable a practitioner to upgrade the quality of his qi. It is not necessary to visualize a palace, but this particular model has proven to work much better than others for historical reasons. The cracking of the pillars is a visual representation of the flawed and Imperfect results of the upgrade progress. Upgrading your own life state and qi quality so that you more closely resemble a True God is one of the greatest difficulties of qi cultivation. Unlike natural cultivation where it may be possible for a gifted being to evolve into a True God in a single leap, qi cultivation can only progress through steps. It is also why mech pilots and mech designers must advance through several ranks."

The notion that a standard mech pilot could transform into a god pilot in a single transition sounded incredibly absurd to Ves!

The same went for a Novice Mech Designer directly turning into a Star Designer!

There were way too many requirements to reach these True God ranks that beginners had to go through a long process of evolution and strengthening before they could become remotely qualified to make the last and ultimate leap!

Understanding that granted Ves a better perspective of all of the crazy and imaginative stages described in the ancient cultivation methods.

"Growing dao fruits... why are you not allowed to eat them? Forming nascent souls... isn't that just a more primitive and distorted variety of a companion spirit? Walt, harvesting the souls of millions of people in order to force a qualitative transformation through excess quantitative accumulation? The practitioners of these bloodthirsty methods must have all turned into genocidal killers! Walt... worship the Heavenly Emperor in order to receive his blessing that can unlock further breakthroughs... isn't this Just a disguised form of deity cultivation? What a scam!"

If Ves read through all of these texts without his mother's clear explanations, then he would have definitely taken them all at face value. He might even force his clansmen or their design spirits to practice these heavily flawed methods without demanding any changes!

Yet now that Cynthia had opened his eyes, it had become impossible for Ves to have any confidence in their safety and effectiveness!

"Compared to other cultivators who cannot see the forest for the trees, you are in a much better position. I have taught you the purpose and the process of cultivation. I have explained the fundamental need for any method to draw power from an energy source. I have given you multiple different classifications of cultivation approaches that you can combine to produce superior results. I have even shown you examples of old but authentic cultivation methods that have worked in the past. You should have all of the building blocks you need to proceed on your own. You do not require any further assistance in your current research."

His mother was right. While Cynthia clearly possessed a lot more secrets, it was not necessary for her to give him any more tutelage.

He was a Senior Mech Designer. He excelled at learning limited amounts of knowledge and applying what he knew to create fantastic works!

His grasp over spiritual engineering had Improved by such an enormous leap today that he couldn't wait to Invent brand-new cultivation methods for all of his living products!

Before he left his mother alone, he asked one more question.

"You mentioned at the start that you would give me a gift. Where is it, mother?"

"Ah. Of course. Here you go, my child."

One more scroll materialized before Veronica. This one looked fancier and more luxurious than the other ones. It signified that Cynthia considered the texts contained within to be a lot more valuable than the other ones!

As the cyborg cat slowly used her feline body to unroll the scroll, he quickly noticed the enormous differences!

"Did you... create this cultivation method... for me?" She asked.

"I did. I cannot help but notice that your Blinky is not using his abilities to the utmost." The Oblivion Empress said with a loving smile. "If you wish to retain your leadership and keep your strengthening subordinates under your control, it is best if you can improve your strength more quickly. This cultivation method that I have created for you makes use of simple but reliable cultivation techniques to upgrade Blinky's devouring ability until he can match or surpass the capabilities of the entity you call the Unending One. When practiced to the end, your companion spirit can become a god that devour and break down every form of qi. You can treat all of the power of heaven and earth as your food!"

That certainly sounded incredibly Impressive!

However, Ves already rejected the cultivation method created by his mother. Not only did it neglect the other qualities of his companion spirit such as his crucial design network, it also came with an even greater fatal flaw!

The central artistic conception used to form the basis of this qi cultivation method was the Unending One!

What this meant was that this method ultimately demanded Blinky to change from his current cute cat form into a giant tentacled whale monstrosity!

This was an intolerable demand to cat lover like Ves!

Chapter 5062 Cultivation Method Designer

Ves stood right inside the middle of the Sacred Temple.

After receiving a profound lesson on cultivation and a broad overview of the methods that cultivators used to evolve into True Gods, Ves needed a lot of time to process what he learned.

He decided to take a break from reality and enter the System Space in order to reconfigure his theoretical frameworks on spiritual energy, spiritual engineering and cultivation in general.

He benefited a lot from this comprehensive mental reorganization.

The way he looked at different phenomena had changed forever. The knowledge freely given by his mother had opened his eyes to a hidden layer of truth that only the privileged few understood.

Ves felt as if he had joined a secret club consisting of other True Gods and big shots.

It gave him the illusion that he had risen from the masses and ascended to a height where he could look down on society!

The knowledge granted by his mother was incomparably precious. Whether it was the overview on cultivation methods or the numerous ancient cultivation methods that described real working processes that he could readily make use of, Ves gained the basic capital to develop his own cultivation methods!

The way he looked at the three Divine Cores floating in the middle of his Sacred Hearth had changed.

He understood more profoundly that these glowing blobs of light not just represented his Spirituality and the spiritualities of several incarnations, but also signified his artistic conceptions to an extent.

Although none of his Divine Cores had completely evolved into specific shapes, Ves had grown so much as of late that they already started to morph into defined shapes.

His own Divine Core was morphing into a Hand of Creation, alluding to his focus and ability to create all kinds of products, particularly living ones.

Blinky's Divine Core began to resemble a Whale Devouring Maw, showing that the heritage of the Unending One served as the basis of his identity and basis of power.

Vulcan's Divine Core shifted into a near-perfect replica of the Hammer of Brilliance, which showed that craftsmanship was becoming the most dominant aspect of his domain.

All of these changes took place without Ves putting any conscious thought behind his own cultivation. He and his incarnations just utilized their abilities naturally and went about their lives according to their usual patterns.

Ves understood now that he and his incarnation had been engaging in natural cultivation all of this time.

"There is nothing wrong with that, but natural cultivation is ultimately limited and not as good as real cultivation methods." He reminded himself.

His mother clearly expressed contempt at inborn gods and other organisms that cultivated according to what they had been endowed with by nature or their creators.

Just as how ancient humans transcended the limitations of their own weak bodies by developing technologies and creating increasingly stronger tools to form their own civilizations, a cultivator could master his own fate and work towards becoming much greater than his original self!

Ves looked around the interior of the Sacred Temple and gained a greater understanding of the deep meaning of the Mech Designer System.

He used to wonder why the System randomly presented options related to different forms of cultivation after it had completed its lengthy upgrade.

No more.

"According to the System, mech design and cultivation are intertwined. They are one of the same."

Ves felt extremely fortunate that he had chosen to go for Spiritual Ascension. This was the most suitable upgrade for him in the Age of Dawn.

With Messier 87 continually flooding the Red Ocean Dwarf Galaxy with exotic radiation, the value of Spiritual Ascension had skyrocketed!

"This is my time."

He had all of the ingredients necessary to excel in this new and dangerous age!

He just needed to form a plan and properly chart out his Spiritual Ascension. He no longer found it acceptable for him to cultivate in a purely passive manner.

Even if Blinky, Veronica and Vulcan could eventually grow stronger just by continuing to exist as they did in the past, Ves no longer wanted them to coast along!

It was like recognizing that they were piloting first generation mechs when Ves had just learned how to design fifth generation mechs!

How could he allow his incarnations to stick with weak and outdated methods when he could easily provide them with much better alternatives?

The only issue now was that he needed to actually design them, and that was anything but simple.

The example cultivation methods contained in the scrolls and books conjured up by his mother were all lengthy, abstruse and mysterious.

There was an entire science behind cultivation. There was a great need for specific knowledge and rigor because cultivation had a lot of pitfalls!

"Any mistake may lead to permanent and irreparable changes." Ves frowned. "There are many cases where cultivators do not have a second chance. They are all playing with their own lives. Once they have taken a wrong turn in their cultivation journey, they can never back up and choose the correct path!"

It took a lot of guts and an unwavering heart for cultivators to persist to the end. Those who did not want to risk their lives to evolve into True Gods and obtain a huge amount of power and longevity were bound to make limited accomplishments.

Ves recognized that there was a lot of danger in developing his own cultivation methods, but he did not want to remain weak in an environment where he needed to grow his capabilities as soon as possible.

He decided to go through with his ambitious plan to expand his spiritual engineering activities to developing cultivation methods.

However, he did not intend to go too deep down this rabbit hole.

"I am still a mech designer first and foremost." Ves reminded himself. "My spiritual engineering activities must always facilitate my mech design work. If that isn't the case, then it is not worth my time."

His mother explicitly told him that he had become locked in the mech designer trajectory.

His design seed and design flame had become permanent fixtures of his Spirituality. There was no way of removing it without inflicting permanent damage to his own Divine Core!

Of course, Ves did not have any intentions to turn his back on mech design. His love for mechs remained strong and his ambitions remained unchanged!

"Creation cultivation suits me just fine." He grinned.

As a human who grew up in a modern human third-state in the Age of Mechs, his wants and needs differed a lot from his mother and other so-called 'cultivators'.

For example, his mother told him that the overwhelming desire for people to pursue cultivation was to live forever.

Though he could certainly understand the appeal of becoming inextinguishable and undying, his own value system did not really put a lot of stock in this kind of benefit.

"What's the point of living forever?"

Life was precious because it was scarce. People such as his grandfather made the most of their natural life spans because their time was so short.

"What truly matters is not the ability to live forever, but to give your own life meaning."

Living a few centuries longer certainly helped with building up a larger and more lasting legacy, but once Ves had achieved all of his life goals, he did not really feel that much of a desire to live any further.

So long as his works benefited his society, so long as many people remembered his contributions and so long as his children and descendants thrived, there was no reason to stick around any longer.

The future belonged to the generations to come.

Perhaps his vision was a bit silly to other people, but Ves did not care for the opinions.

He was a human and a mech designer. He intended to live as one from beginning to end.

As for all of this nonsense about True Gods, faith and immortality, Ves did not intend to reject these elements as they gradually entered his life, but he did not feel the need to obsess over them either.

"My goal of becoming a Star Designer is not to become immortal, but to design better mechs and other works." He affirmed to himself.

This was his conviction and his heart.

So long as he kept his original goals in mind, he would never go astray.

He took a deep breath. "Let's begin."

His immediate priorities at the moment was to develop brand-new cultivation methods tailored to himself, his clansmen, his design spirits and his living mechs.

"That should be enough for the time being."

That sounded like a lot of work, but as long as his theoretical foundation became strong enough, it shouldn't be too difficult to develop both customized and specific cultivation methods for different end users.

Once he completed this chore, he intended to go back to focusing on mech design and track everyone's progress in cultivation over time.

"This sort of stuff takes time to produce results."

Ves just hoped that all of this cultivation stuff would strengthen his clan and his forces in time for the next big crisis. The native aliens of the Red Ocean were just getting started in their counter-attack against red humanity!

The urgency of the times forced him to concentrate on the task at hand.

"Let's start with myself. I don't need to develop a cultivation method for myself as I am already working towards becoming a Star Designer."

Ves had no dissatisfaction about the mech designer progression trajectory. His mother personally thought it was the best and most superior form of creation cultivation that she had ever witnessed in her extensive life!

Although the mech design cultivation method came with a few downsides such as being bound to the existence of mechs and forming an inescapable dependence on the Kingdom of Mechs, the benefits were more than worthwhile!

For example, he couldn't wait to become a Star Designer!

Once he could fully direct his strong and varied creation abilities in many other fields, he would be able to produce a host of products that other types of True Gods could only dream about despite their immense power!

"I am already doing alright. It's my incarnations that truly need better cultivation methods."

He decided to start with Blinky. As a companion spirit, his nature was a lot simpler than his other incarnations, so he wouldn't have to juggle too many variables at the start.

His mother had also given him a huge head-start by gifting him a model cultivation method that was completely tailored for Blinky!

Although Ves was not satisfied with exact processes and the end goal of this bespoke method, it at least gave him a clear blueprint of what a cultivation method for a companion spirit was supposed to look like!

For example, his mother delineated Blinky's growth and evolution into several different stages.

Each subsequent stage enabled Blinky to upgrade his inherent life state and energy quality by another step.

Currently, the specific processes at every stage were solely geared towards transforming Blinky into a version of the Unending One, but Ves could easily tweak them so that they led towards a different destination!

It reminded Ves of the early days of his mech design career.

Back when he was starting out as a Novice Mech Designer, he did not possess the skills, confidence or vision to design his first original mech right away.

He had been forced to start with licensing an existing mech design so that he could modify it and develop new variants that granted slightly different advantages in combat.

Ves felt that he could adopt a similar approach towards developing a new cultivation method to replace Blinky's inferior natural cultivation process.

"Hm, let's see. What should I be aiming for instead?"

Every complete cultivation method charted a trajectory towards becoming a True God.

There were many variations of True Gods, and each of them came with their own advantages, shortcomings, requirements and taboos.

With so many different options at his disposal, it became a little difficult for Ves to make up his mind for a while.

Chapter 5063 Crazy Cultivation

As an engineer, Ves understood he needed to adopt a more systematic approach towards designing a new cultivation method for Blinky.

Trying to pluck out random ideas from his mind or following the first impulses that came to mind rarely led to optimal results!

If he wanted to do a proper job at this, then he needed to create a clear overview of his situation and his needs.

Ves exited the Sacred Hearth and moved around in the courtyard of the Sacred Temple in order to put his thoughts in order.

He activated a projected interface in order to list out the conditions he was working under at the moment.

"My main body and by extension Blinky are both operating in the Red Ocean, which is currently exposed to a modest degree of exotic radiation. I have no idea what to do with R particle radiation, but that is definitely not the case with E energy radiation! Different from the Milky Way, so much ambient spiritual energy is becoming available that my companion spirit can endlessly gorge on Messier 87's output without exhausting its supply. The only limitation is Blinky's own limited capacity to digest and absorb spiritual energy."

Ves recognized that these were extremely favorable circumstances compared to the conditions in the Milky Way.

It was not necessary for Ves to stick to cultivation methods that were optimized for times of scarcity. The Red Ocean gained so much access to the 'power of heaven' that it would be a waste if Blinky refrained from stuffing himself full of all of these free energies!

Once Ves listed out his current conditions, he turned his attention to his goals for Blinky.

"As a mech designer, I am good at designing and making stuff, but that's it. I don't have any other inherent advantages. For example, I will still remain highly dependent on resources supplied by other parties."

Ves recognized that this was an inherent shortcoming of the mech design cultivation method that had deliberately been left unaddressed.

He speculated that the Progenitors of Mechs did not want mech designers to become too independent and self-sufficient.

By making it so that mech designers all the way up to Star Designers became dependent on large and thriving populations of humans, this special brand of creation cultivators would never have any reason to undermine modern human societies!

The same applied for mech pilots, who would not be able to obtain any mechs or have any reasons to fight for without remaining an upstanding member of human civilization!

Although Ves understood that mech designers were set up this way for good reasons, that did not necessarily mean he had to play by the rules.

Ves happened to possess a lot less trust in human society and its institutions. He had experienced so many betrayals and breakdowns throughout his career that he did not want to remain stuck in this corner!

If the upcoming conflicts between red humanity and the indigenous alien races of the Red Ocean and Messier 87 ever went sour, then Ves needed to make sure that he would be able to do well even if he was all by himself!

"I need strength and resources." He summed up. "Blinky can cover both to an extent."

His desire for strength was not that strong. He learned from his mother that all qi cultivators possessed a massive disadvantage in any confrontation against high-level mech pilots.

Pure energy-based life forms such as companion spirits had it worse!

Therefore, rather than trying so hard to strengthen Blinky only for him to end up as a mediocre fighter, it was better for him to nurture a bunch of his own subordinates into god pilots so that they could fight in his stead.

His mother had already adopted this strategy, so there were clear merits to this approach!

That said, he did not want to give up on any easy opportunities for Blinky to be able to defend himself against different threats.

At the very least, his mother's cultivation method granted Blinky the option to evolve into a formidable threat against any other energy-based life forms!

Ves wanted to retain this particular quality as much as possible while also expanding on his other capabilities.

It was much more interesting for Ves to turn Blinky into a better helper for all of his productive activities.

Blinky already played a useful role by supplying Ves with lots of spiritual energy. The only problem was that the Star Cat was only proficient in producing a single variation of spiritual energy, which severely constrained what Ves could make.

Ves wanted Blinky to gain the ability to output spiritual energy with other attributes. Though he could already obtain a lot of different elements from different design spirits, he felt it was better to reduce his dependence on external parties.

"I also need to obtain a supply of physical materials."

This was a lot more difficult to accomplish. A lot of the example cultivation methods that his mother granted him did not contain any word about conjuring up materials. They mostly focused on increasing the direct combat power or other mystical capabilities of the practitioner!

None of them put a lot of emphasis if at all towards the production of resources.

This reflected an overall tendency of cultivation that bothered him a lot.

Many qi cultivation methods were incredibly selfish by nature. They only focused on strengthening the cultivator without describing any clear or obvious means of giving back to their society.

This was much different for mech designers who would never be able to make a lot of progress unless they explicitly made it their goal to benefit their own society!

"I can't repeat the mistakes of the past."

In order for Blinky to complement his career as a mech designer and serve a useful function to society, Ves did not want his design spirit to focus solely on cultivating his devouring and absorption capabilities.

Ves rejected the notion of turning Blinky into the Unending One!

Even if he could successfully modify the cultivation method provided by his mother so that Blinky retained his cute cat form, Ves still did not intend to pursue this path!

What he actually wanted was to turn his companion spirit into a resource processor of sorts.

"If Blinky can devour a lot of ambient spiritual energy from the environment and convert it all into useful spiritual energy and physical materials, then I can truly maintain an independent existence!"

He could obtain all of the phasewater he needed to produce his transphasic mechs and goods!

He could generate all of the universal life energy that he needed to accelerate the growth of all of his spiritual products!

Third parties would no longer hold as much leverage over him as before by restricting their supply of essential resources!

The advantages to Ves were too many to count. He could not think of many reasons to reject this approach.

"The only problem is making it happen." He frowned.

The greater the goals, the greater the requirements!

Cultivation methods had to follow the law of conservation of energy and other fundamental laws of nature as well.

While it shouldn't be too challenging for Blinky to gain the capability to produce other spiritual energy attributes, making him spit out real physical materials such as P-stones and Unending alloy was another story!

As Ves went over the many problems associated with this incredibly difficult demand, he soon thought of a possible way to effectively satisfy his needs.

He thought back on one of the most ridiculous cultivation methods shared by his mother.

"That stuff about opening up an entirely independent space inside your own body and slowly expanding it to form a landmass, a planet and star is pretty interesting."

This was mostly a body cultivation method, much to Ves' surprise. While it contained a lot of elements of qi cultivation as well, the main purpose was to strengthen a human body so that it could ultimately harness the power of an entire internal universe!

This was a cultivation method with extreme resource requirements, but also possessed an extremely high upper boundary.

There was no theoretical end to this cultivation method. A practitioner could form an internal star system, galaxy or even an entire universe as long as he was able to absorb enough resources!

Of course, Ves had no intentions to practice this stupid body cultivation method, but he became inspired by many of its processes, theories, techniques and possibilities.

What if Blinky formed his own internal space through cultivation?

What if Blinky absorbed Messier 87's practically limitless supply of E energy radiation to continually expand the volume of this internal space?

What if Blinky converted the absorbed energies into a rich variety of stars and planets that contained a huge amount of different resources?

It would be like having a galaxy like the Red Ocean or the Milky Way all for himself!

His breath grew hotter as he became engrossed by all of the possibilities.

Not only would Blinky be able to leverage the power of his own little universe, but he would also be able to grant Ves all of the resources he needed to construct his ultimate works!

Of course, there were two huge problems with this ambitious plan.

The first was that body cultivation methods were invalid for pure energy-based life forms.

The second was that Blinky was only able to convert ambient spiritual energy into other forms of spiritual energy.

Ves did not let these limitations stop him from pursuing this approach.

His response to them was simple.

"Let's start with keeping it virtual for the time being." He determined. "Blinky already excels at working with spiritual energy, so I need to maximize that advantage."

If Ves let go of the demand to produce real physical materials, then the proposed cultivation method became a lot more viable!

Instead of forcing Blinky to form a material universe inside his internal space, Ves would make his companion spirit form an imaginary universe.

It would consist solely of spiritual energy absorbed from the environment.

In fact, Blinky did not even have to process and digest E energy radiation in order to use it as the building blocks for his imaginary universe! He could directly devour the ambient spiritual energy in the environment and automatically have it fall into the appropriate places!

For example, an imaginary star could be made up of spiritual energies attributed towards fire, stars, heat, light and many other related elements.

An imaginary planet would largely be made from earth, rock, metal and mass.

Blinky could even selectively seed the imaginary planets with life by injecting them with life-attributed spiritual energy.

Perhaps his companion spirit might be able to create entire ecosystems and civilizations of intelligent imaginary life forms!

This was not the end.

While Ves expected this ambitious cultivation method to remain entirely virtual at the pre-divinity stage, it was a different story once it entered the post-divinity stage.

Once Blinky evolved into a True God, he would have the option of gradually transforming his entire internal universe into a material universe!

After all, the conversion of energy to matter was an inherent capability of every True God.

While it was impossible for this incredibly energy hungry conversion process to transform an entire imaginary universe into a real one in a single instance, it should be more than sufficient to produce enough physical materials to meet Ves' daily needs!

"This is crazy!"

If Ves did not obtain the teachings of his mother, then he would have never dared to come up with such an insane-sounding cultivation method!

Yet all of the theory he learned so far told him that it was absolutely viable as long as he configured the cultivation method correctly!

The conditions were harsh. Not only did the practitioner need to possess a highly effective energy absorption ability, but it also demanded an incredibly energy rich environment.

Ves predicted that it would ultimately not be enough for him to remain in the Red Ocean anymore.

If he wanted to meet his companion spirit's exponentially growing energy needs at the later stages and especially the post-divinity stage, then he needed to relocate to Messier 87 sooner or later!

Otherwise, Blinky would never be able to absorb the humongous amounts of energy needed to convert

"This is fine."

Ves possessed enough confidence in his ability to be able to navigate this gigantic and incredible galaxy in the future. He just needed to advance to Star Designer and build an incredibly powerful fleet and mech force to accompany him in this epic journey.

"This is true Spiritual Ascension!"

Chapter 5064 First Attempt

Creating a new cultivation method was not a simple matter.

It was easy to write down different fantasies, but it was much harder to ensure they were sound, consistent and more importantly safe!

The rich cultivation traditions of humanity encompassed many different theories that described what worked and what did not work as well.

Ves did not have to start out from scratch. He possessed plenty of existing examples to build upon.

"It's just like designing a variant again." He reminded himself.

He first needed to select his base model. He chose to start with the cultivation method developed by his mother as it already contained the right structure for his own companion spirit.

He then proceeded to strip out a lot of components from it so that it got reduced to its bare minimum.

Ves noticed that his mother had designed this cultivation method in a way that made it incredibly modular and easy to understand. It formed a huge contrast with all of the ancient cultivation methods that seemed to compete in terms of abstruseness and complexity.

He especially hated it when they tried to merge with all kinds of superstitious nonsense that added a lot of needless complexity.

If the practitioner of these methods did not possess the exact correct understanding of crucial concepts, then it became incredibly easy for them to form the wrong artistic conceptions and suffer from cultivation deviation!

"Perhaps this is a subtle form of copyright protection." Ves guessed.

Tying in a cultivation method with strange theories and interpretations meant that it wouldn't be effective to people who somehow managed to steal it. Only the right teachers could help a practitioner to follow the right steps and form the proper artistic conceptions.

In any case, Ves saw no need to overcomplicate matters for his own usage. Blinky's cultivation method was already highly specific to an existence of his nature to begin with. It was practically impossible for any other cultivator or spiritual entity to follow the same trajectory!

Ves did not hesitate to fill up the space he just freed up with components from other cultivation methods.

Naturally, he copied and pasted a lot of cultivation processes from the internal universe body cultivation method that originally inspired his crazy idea.

Compared to many qi cultivation methods, the body cultivation method was a lot simpler and more straightforward.

It gave Ves the impression that it was tailor-made for violent brutes who did not possess a lot of intelligence or patience to engage in complicated theories.

This made it a lot easier for Ves to transplant the essence of its cultivation processes to the method he was designing for Blinky.

Of course, Ves was under no illusion that simple copying and pasting would make everything work perfectly. He needed to make a lot of adaptations, just like how he needed to alter a mech design after integrating a new part.

Though Ves did not possess a comprehensive technical understanding of this kind of stuff, his mother had taught him that every cultivation method ultimately amounted to absorbing some form of energy into strength or progress.

As long as he kept this in mind, it became a lot harder for him to get lost. He just had to make sure that anything he added to the cultivation method promoted the absorption of ambient spiritual energy and converted it all into an imaginary universe.

He split up into seven discrete stages corresponding to real stellar objects and groupings, though the boundaries between the stages were not that rigid.

[First stage: continent

Second stage: planet

Third stage: star system

Fourth stage: galaxy

Fifth stage: galaxy cluster

Sixth stage: supercluster

Seventh stage: cosmos]

It may be possible to add an eight stage in the form of a multiverse consisting of many different universes, but that sounded so ludicrously far away that Ves did not bother to think about it any further.

Aside from that, he also differentiated his method into two modes.

[First mode: imaginary

Second mode: real]

Blinky would remain completely stuck in the first mode in the pre-divinity stage. Only when he became a True God would he be able to enter into the second mode.

Even then, it would take an immense amount of time and energy to completely convert his internal universe into a real and material existence!

"My companion spirit might never be able to reach the seventh stage and completely enter into the second mode in my lifetime." Ves frowned.

This was fine. Ves only required a certain degree of progress from Blinky in order to obtain real benefits from his companion spirits.

The biggest shortcoming of this bold cultivation method is that Blinky would remain of limited use for a long time.

It essentially represented an enormous bet on his future!

By investing a huge amount in Blinky through all of the years he remained stuck as a pre-divinity companion spirit, Ves hoped to earn fantastic and continuous payoffs once his companion spirit evolved into a True God!

Once Blinky became a post-divinity life form, he would not only be able to produce all kinds of rare resources contained within his imaginary universe, but do so in vastly greater quantities than other True Gods due to the huge amounts of energy at his disposal!

Whether he fueled his matter creation ability with exotic radiation or the energies produced by all of the powerful stars in his internal universe, Blinky was bound to become a gigantic producer of high-value resources!

It reminded Ves of Cassandra Breyer.

Now that he thought about her, it became incredibly obvious that she used to be a genuine True God.

No other entity was as proficient in producing matter out of energy without the use of technology!

For her to end up in such a dire state served as a crucial warning to Ves. Even True Gods could end up weak and isolated!

This was why Ves made sure that Blinky could leverage as much power from his internal universe as possible.

"I'm not sure how effective this will be, but it's better than nothing."

Once he completed the design of his very first real cultivation method, he took a step back and admired his handiwork.

He instinctively felt that it should largely work, but that he may have overlooked a few crucial details.

If he did not address these flaws and shortcomings, then Blinky's cultivation would eventually bump into huge unforeseen problems!

Ves frowned. "I'm not good at this yet. I am just starting out. It shouldn't be a surprise that my first complete work is shoddy."

That was not necessarily a problem.

Unlike other would-be cultivation method designers, Ves possessed an exceedingly rare advantage.

He had access to a friendly and helpful True God in the form of his own mother!

Even though his integrity as a professional mech designer disdained an approach as cheap as running to his own mother to verify his own work, he did not want to joke around when it came to his own cultivation.

Ves did not want to return to his mother too soon, though.

He felt that he could still do much on his own to increase the sophistication and rigor of his own cultivation method.

"Wait a second. I'm inside the System Space right now. The Mech Designer System offers all kinds of goods and services that promote Spiritual Ascension. I would be a fool to neglect its features!

He still had a large reserve of Ascension Points that he could spend on all kinds of enlightenment fruits and other goods.

Aside from that, he also possessed a radiant lottery ticket that he earned from turning the Phobos into a masterwork mech a few months prior!

He hadn't been in a hurry to use up this incredibly valuable lottery ticket because it did not appear he was lacking anything truly essential.

He felt differently now that he had become engrossed in cultivation methods.

The Imaginary Universe Method that he was working on at the moment possessed a lot of promise, but it still had room for improvement.

If he could obtain a huge trove of high-level knowledge related to spiritual engineering or cultivation methods, then he would be able to strengthen and optimize his current work to a massive degree!

Ves was also afraid that it demanded special resources to get started. The biggest hurdle was to create the initial internal space that could slowly be expanded to form an entire universe.

He speculated that he would have to use up a certain quantity of phasewater in order to form the initial space, but he might be wrong!

The original body cultivation method relied on other special and powerful materials to open up a new space. It mentioned a variety of powerful fruits that Ves had never heard of. The attributes of these special materials largely determined the type and dominant element of the universe that body cultivators could form inside their own physiques!

In any case, he saw no reason to keep his radiant lottery ticket in storage anymore. The longer it remained unused, the more he deprived himself of a powerful advantage.

Ves recalled that he used to obtain at least two powerful and incredibly useful rewards from the radiant lottery tickets that he earned in the past!

One of them granted him a Grand Dynamo Elixir. The powerful spiritual construct he gained from it had gone on to help him a lot for a time.

There were good reasons why he designed Blinky to function in a similar manner!

Another radiant lottery ticket awarded him with the Heart of Steel Mantra Fruit, which Ves fed to Vulcan.

He used to be completely clueless about what the Heart of Steel Mantra represented, but not anymore.

Ves recalled its description.

[Heart of Steel Mantra Fruit]

Imparts a complete understanding of a mantra that allows its practitioners to form a Heart of Steel. The Heart of Steel's primary advantage is that it can gradually increase its holder's compatibility and affinity towards metal and anything related to this element. The mantra is also capable of strengthening the willpower, mental fortitude and resistance against all attacks. However, the practitioners of this method are also prone to weakening their empathy and compassion.

Those who practice this mantra to the fullest will turn into gods that are able to transform, manipulate and clad themselves with the hardest and most powerful metals. The Heart of Steel Mantra can only be fully practiced by humans that possess specific genes, a specialized mechanical heart implant, an affinity towards metal and have not practiced any other cultivation techniques. This enlightenment fruit allows an individual to ignore these conditions.

Requirements: Strength must be 1.2 or higher. Endurance must be 2.0 or higher. Intelligence must be 1.0 or higher. Concentration must be 1.7 or higher.

It was only now that he fully realized that this enlightenment fruit was truly worthy of serving as a prize for a radiant lottery ticket!

Not only was it a powerful and well-designed qi and body cultivation method that granted its practitioners a clear trajectory towards evolving into a True God, but it also completely negated the requirement of needing an actual physical body.

This was an absurdly powerful benefit!

This was why Vulcan was successfully able to practice this cultivation method and form a Heart of Steel that gradually allowed him to control and nurture the small amount of high-grade metal energy in the external incarnation's possession.

Ves briefly frowned. "I will have to modify the Heart of Steel Mantra as well. It doesn't contain any obvious deity cultivation elements, and it doesn't make use of Vulcan's inherent relationships with dwarves, mechs and craftsmanship."

Vulcan was supposed to be a production-oriented spirit, not a steely dwarven warrior entity!

If he wanted to obtain a powerful protector, then he would rather invest his resources into Venerable Joshua and do everything possible to elevate him into a god pilot!

He could settle the many shortcomings of Vulcan's acquired cultivation method later. Ves was not in a hurry to fix it as the dwarven ancestral spirit was doing fine for the time being.

He needed to spend time on much more immediate priorities, such as hunting down the Eminence of Torment and completing all of his new mech design projects.

"I should use up my radiant lottery ticket first."

Ves was not sure he could exert enough influence on the System to steer it into giving him the right category of prizes.

However, even if he ended up obtaining a completely different prize such as an enlightenment fruit related to mech design, he would still be happy with the outcome!

"Radiant lottery tickets never produce anything weak or useless. I can trust the System at least that much."

If he truly needed to obtain additional knowledge or resources, he could always pay a visit down to the Tree of Possibilities or the Divine Bazaar and just exchange what he needed with his hard-earned Ascension Points!

"It doesn't make that much sense anymore to hold onto my AP either." Ves thought as he rubbed his hairless chin. "I need to get a lot of stuff done now that the Age of Dawn has just begun. If I don't progress quickly enough, then I won't have enough agency in the times when I need it the most!"

Ves was sick and tired of being treated as cannon fodder. With so many galaxy-wide events in motion, he yearned to become a more integral part of red humanity's unfolding history.

He had a strong feeling that mastering the ability to design cultivation methods had the potential to completely supercharge his rise to power!

Once he enabled all of his living mechs to grow more effectively by taking advantage of the ubiquitous availability of exotic radiation, they should definitely be able to revolutionize the entire mech industry!

Chapter 5065 Strength Tester

Not all universes were created equal.

According to the body cultivation method that his mother originally showed to him, it was impossible to create an entirely new internal space in one's body just by wishing for it really hard.

If imagination enabled any cultivator to become inextinguishable and all-power, then the cosmos would have been crawling with trillions of True Gods by this time!

Everything had a price. Even cultivation could not escape this fundamental rule.

Most life forms did not possess powerful minds and spirits from the start.

Their mental and spiritual energies could not possibly support the creation of a construct as absurd as a miniature internal space!

The creation of exceptionally powerful and reality-defying artistic conceptions imposed such high demands that cultivators needed to borrow external assistance.

It was actually quite simple to understand. If the cultivator's own ability to manipulate the power of heaven and earth was not enough to produce the desired result, then he could leverage the condensed spiritual attributes of powerful objects in order to meet the massive energy demand!

Ves thought it was no different from a mech pilot defeating a powerful opponent by hopping into the cockpit of a mech.

The key here was that not every resource that was rich with high quality energies fit a specific cultivation method.

A cultivator trying to become the ultimate flame that could burn the heavens or whatever would likely not be able to gain as much if he obtained a chunk of exotic ice.

Unless the cultivation method was sophisticated enough to deal with opposing or incompatible elements in an internally consistent manner, the use of inappropriate resources would only contaminate the practitioner's spirituality and ruin his artistic conception!

Fortunately, the body cultivation method that Ves took a lot of inspiration from took all of this messy stuff into account.

It was flexible and versatile enough to be able to work with nearly any sort of potent resource!

The only demand was that it possessed a large enough quantity of high-grade energies.

The overall element and nature of the exotic resource largely influenced what kind of universe could be born with its energies.

A purple flame might cause most of the stars in the universe to burn purple.

A piece of ore with an unusual high density might cause all of the stellar objects to be 10 times heavier than normal.

A bottle of mystical water could cause most planets in the internal universe to be covered by water!

All sorts of odd phenomena might occur. The key takeaway from these possibilities was that the laws of nature of the new internal universe could be substantially different from the main universe.

This was why Ves possessed a certain amount of confidence that it was possible to have Blinky form a completely imaginary universe.

He did not forget that it was best to double-check his work with his mother before he started to cultivate his own work.

In any case, Ves first needed to get his hands on a high-energy material or object to open up the new internal universe!

This was why he descended from the mountain top until he reached the clearing where the Wishing Fountain awaited his arrival.

He already held a radiant lottery ticket in his hand.

The function of the Wishing Fountain gave him a bit of confidence in his upcoming lottery draw.

Unlike the completely random lottery draws from the past, Ves had the option of specifying the category of possible prizes in the pool!

While the Wishing Fountain did not permit Ves to be too specific in his demands, he could at least ensure his ticket did not produce anything irrelevant such as a random mech or a useless alien sculpture.

As Ves raised the ticket to his face and thought hard on his desired wish.

"Please give me an object or material that is extremely dense and packed with high-grade energies. It needs to possess enough powerful energies to support the birth of a new universe."

He could feel the Wishing Fountain responding to his demand. His wish had primed it in the right direction, or at least Ves assumed this was the case.

After he firmly settled his mind on what kind of prize he wanted to obtain, he decisively tossed the ticket into the fountain!

The water contained in the pool began to light up in rainbow colors as the radiant lottery ticket dissolved in an instant.

Waves of energy escaped from the Wishing Fountain as it became more and more active.

Once the light show had reached its peak, a tall pillar rose from the chromatic pool of water!

The pillar made out of a golden material continued to rise and rise until it had reached a height of approximately 200 meters!

Ves widened his eyes in astonishment as his head tilted further and further upwards.

His evolved vision enabled him to detect small markings that were evenly spread along the length of the golden pillar.

He figured that each of them represented a different prize.

"Let me guess. The most valuable prizes are at the top, am I correct?"

How was he supposed to draw his prize?

It wasn't until a square platform emerged in front of the pillar that Ves had a good idea what the Wishing Fountain came up with this time.

"You want me... to hit this giant button?"

The entire imagery of this spectacle reminded him of those old-fashioned strength tester attractions that were common in fairs and amusement parks.

No matter the era, there were always people out there that wanted to test their might in public and boast about their prodigious strength in front of their family and friends!

Ves looked confused. These gadgets were primarily a test of strength and skill. Chance had little to do with the results. It made little sense to use this to draw a specific prize.

"That is unless the best and most desirable prizes are situated at specific heights."

Ves had no idea how much force he needed to deliver in order to make this strength tester reach a certain height.

He could only judge according to his intuition.

Right now, he could vaguely guess that his physical strength was far from enough to reach the top.

"I feel my limit should be around 160 to 180 meters." He vaguely guessed.

Ever since his recent sublimation that somehow turned him into a phase lord, his physical strength had increased by a significant margin. Phasewater shenanigans somehow increased the real size of his body by a modest margin, but kept his physical dimensions constant.

In fact, Veronica had grown a lot larger and thicker than her original cat-sized form due to her substantially higher phasewater concentration!

"It's not enough to have more strength. I also need to exert more control." Ves furrowed his brows.

If he assumed that the strength scale of this golden pillar scaled with impact force on a linear basis, then there was a possibility that he could accurately nail the right prize!

"No. That's a bit too uncertain. I should look at groupings of possible prizes in order to make sure that I will at least win a useful consolation prize if I have missed the mark."

Ves patiently studied the markings that were stacked on top of each other. They all resembled carvings that depicted all manner of strange and unusual objects.

Although the images were a little crude and stylized, he could still deduce the overall nature of every prize.

"A pear-shaped fruit... a straight sword... a rotted tree... a clump of soil... a disk with a broken side..."

He had the impression that each of these objects possessed their own special characteristics.

The problem was that Ves could not decipher their precise properties and energy values at all! The markings on the pillar simply conveyed too little information for him to make any solid judgments!

When Ves compared the bottom markings to the upper markings, he did notice a vague increase in quality.

The objects at the top looked significantly more impressive and high class than the apparent pieces of junk at the bottom of the pillar!

This was why he directed more attention at the markings at the upper half of the golden pillar.

He eventually identified a number of promising objects.

"That shadow figure looks really promising."

If he could embed Blinky's internal universe with the power of shadow, then he could potentially produce all sorts of shadow-themed objects!

From shadow weapons to shadow mechs, the possibilities to engage in dirty and covert warfare were limitless!

However, Ves did not like the prizes that were stacked above and below this particular prize. If Ves did not hit the platform with the exact amount of force, he would end up with a much less interesting gain!

This was why he moved on and considered several more alternatives before setting his sights on the markings situated at a height of around 133 meters.

He saw a big ball of plasma.

To be more precise, it was a star!

Energy formed the foundation of everything. Both the imaginary and material realms could not sustain themselves if they ran out of juice one day.

What better way to promote the growth of Blinky's internal universe and accelerate the conversion of energy to matter than to promote the growth of more energy sources?

The best part about this prize was that the ones situated above and below this prize did not look too shabby either.

Just above was a planet that bore a surprisingly large resemblance to Old Earth. It conveyed a sense of mass and solidity that made it seem as if it could grow to an endless size!

Just below lay an ancient stone obelisk that had apparently been used to regulate powerful energies. Its surface contained markings as well and depicted vague instances converting heat into electricity and using energy to form intangible walls and weapons.

Ves actually found it difficult to decide which one he preferred the most. He had a strong feeling that each of them could give Blinky's internal universe a strong set of traits that conveyed distinct and useful advantages.

"The ball of plasma should increase the average energy level of my universe by a great extent. Everything Blinky can do will become more powerful as a result. Securing the book on energy manipulation will probably increase the versatility and applicability of spiritual energy in Blinky's imaginary universe. Obtaining a model of an Earth-like planet might allow the internal universe to contain a real physical landmass in advance."

The only concern he had was that the prizes at this height were a bit weaker compared to the ones situated above.

He shook his head. "It doesn't matter if these prizes aren't as strong. What is important is that they impart the properties that I need."

He no longer hesitated and drew out his Hammer of Brilliance. This was the only hammer-like object in his possession, and he had practiced swinging with it plenty of times in order to ensure he tapped people's heads with the flat end without crushing any skulls.

Of course, trying to apply minimum force was substantially different from exerting a lot more strength!

He took his time to make a number of practice swings. He adjusted his posture and tweaked his muscle exertion.

It wasn't until the pillar started to shake a bit that Ves no longer stalled any further.

"Alright, alright, I'm starting!"

He slowly raised his hammer and held its grip with both of his hands.

He waited for the right moment before he lowered the heirloom with a mighty but slightly constrained blow!

BANG!

A rainbow corona immediately lit up from the bottom and rapidly rose towards the sky!

30 meters... 60 meters... 90 meters...

It was not until it reached 110 meters that the rainbow lightshow significantly lost speed as if it was affected by gravity.

120 meters... 125 meters... 130 meters...

"C'mon c'mon c'mon!"

Ves grew intensely nervous at this time. If his strike had caused the rainbow shaft to end up just above or just below his target group, then he would regret this failure for the rest of his life!

131 meters... 132 meters... 133 meters...

134 meters.

Ves widened his eyes as the markings at this height began to glow as well.

"Yes!"

Although Ves did not obtain the prize he desired the most, he was more than happy with the one he ended up obtaining.

A real obelisk that was twice as tall as his own height materialized next to the Wishing Fountain!

Ves could immediately feel that the seemingly ancient relic contained a lot of power.

It had been used to produce great results in the past, and had undergone profound changes as a result!

All of the energies that used to be challenged by this obelisk in a distant age had altered its structure and properties forever.

This gave Ves a much greater chance to enable Blinky to form a completely imaginary universe that could function properly despite the lack of physical matter in the early stages!

Blinky also had a much higher chance of mastering new techniques that enabled the design spirit to produce spiritual energies of different elements!

Chapter 5066 Eternal Love

[Urvenk Obelisk]

Rank: Radiant

This stone obelisk is a central component of an ancient ritual chamber that has been used for great workings in the past. A powerful human astrologist called Urvenk has taken advantage of the materials and the formations of the ritual chamber to seed planets with life, alter the trajectory of moons and hasten the demise of stars.

The Urvenk Obelisk only comprises a part of the working mechanisms of the ritual chamber.

The System's description of his prize was short and left out a lot of information that Ves really wanted to know.

However, from what Ves could interpret from the description as well as his preliminary examinations of the obelisk, his lottery prize fully met his essential requirements!

Even if this ancient obelisk was not a prize that was at the same level of the Grand Dynamo Elixir, it complemented the Imaginary Universe Method extremely well!

It could improve upon the internal rules and laws of the internal space by ensuring that spiritual energy could replicate the properties of matter.

The Urvenk Obelisk may even be able to increase the efficiency of the energy-to-matter conversion process!

Of course, Ves needed to be able to harness the potential of this object, and he wasn't sure whether he could do so with his homebrew cultivation method.

He spent a few more hours examining the obelisk. He tried to touch and manipulate in several ways.

The obelisk channeled enormous amounts of energies once upon a time, and Ves could vaguely infer what happened by studying the traces and examining the transformed matter.

Too much time had apparently passed for any imprint of this mysterious 'Urvenk' to pass the test of time. Ves could only get a vague impression of this so-called astrologer from the techniques he employed and the characteristics of the remnant energies.

Ves became convinced that Urvenk used to be a True God. This explained why one of his tools transformed so much and became so charged with power.

Age may have caused it to erode and weaken to an extent, but the passing of time also caused its essential properties to become more settled and defined.

Ves could do much with such an ancient relic. He almost found it wasteful to use it up just to activate Blinky's powerful new cultivation method.

He did not change his plans, though.

Perhaps he may be able to get a lot of use out of the Urvenk Obelisk in the short term, but Blinky would be able to provide much greater benefits in the long term!

The sooner Blinky got started in the Imaginary Universe Method, the less Ves had to wait to start earning profits from his companion spirit!

"Let's get this done as soon as possible."

Ves used the information he gained from his examinations to modify and expand his self-created cultivation method. He wanted to ensure that the properties of the Urvenk Obelisk would somehow be able to permeate the entire imaginary universe, thereby making it much easier to form more complex stellar objects and phenomena.

"Energy is everything in this universe." He grinned as he adjusted the parameters of his cultivation method according to his shallow understanding of cultivation and a lot of guesswork. "The absence of matter should not be a reason to deny the formation of stars, planets and even life that completely consists of different forms of spiritual energy."

The line between energy and matter was a little blurred when it came to their spiritual variety. It was actually a lot easier for them to acquire opposing properties.

This offered a lot of convenience to Ves as it became a lot easier to realize his ambitious vision.

Once he completed his adjustments, he went over the entire cultivation method and concluded that he had done the best he could on his own. Ves did not have the experience or theoretical understanding to produce anything better at this time.

"Is this my limit, though?"

Ves recalled that he could obtain a lot of knowledge by ingesting the right enlightenment fruits.

He became a lot more willing to spend big on fruits compared to the past. Not only was he and his clan in considerably greater peril than in the past, but he could also get a lot more use out of different cultivation methods.

What he needed was more templates and components. The examples his mother gave him were not enough. He drooled at the thought of obtaining more sophisticated and multi-layered cultivation methods that contained plenty of inventive processes and techniques!

Ves could deconstruct each of them and selectively make use of useful bits and pieces to construct all kinds of useful cultivation methods for his dependents!

He already had a general idea on what he needed to learn.

"I should grab at least one qi cultivation method, one deity cultivation method and one artifact cultivation method." He resolved. "It would be helpful to pick up stuff related to contract cultivation and body cultivation as well, but it is not completely essential. Each of these methods should be as versatile and general as possible. They should not be too simple, but I don't want them to get muddled up with too much mystical nonsense."

These were harsh demands. Ves did not expect to be able to obtain an ideal set of fruits.

As Ves reached the Tree of Possibilities, he patiently examined all of the fruits that dangled from its branches.

He spotted a few familiar ones that he saw in a different light given all of the changes that took place in his life.

[Puelmer Mid-Level Transphasic Weapon Principles]

Price: 850 Ascension Points

Imparts a comprehensive set of essential theories and design principles related to the most widespread transphasic weapon types mastered by a mid-level weapons engineer of the puelmer race. The knowledge applies to weapons at every scale, from small arms to battleship armaments.

"I want this real bad."

The high price of this enlightenment fruit reflected its value!

Even if exotic radiation would cause a lot of contemporary puelmer technology to become outdated in the medium to long term, the fundamental theories and design principles would still remain highly relevant in a lot of different projects!

Ves did not have to go through the trouble of finding another mech designer who specialized in ranged weapons to develop the Larkinson Clan's next rifleman mech.

He could take care of all of the work himself with the help of this powerful fruit!

However, Ves eventually turned away from this option. Mastering pure technologies was still important in his work as a mech designer, but he could learn all of this the old-fashioned way.

Cultivation methods were much harder to come by, especially the more powerful ones which were evidently a lot more tightly protected against theft.

Ves' eyes immediately lit up as he spotted an incredibly relevant cultivation method!

[Eternal Love Bloodline Dual Cultivation Manual]

Price: 105 Ascension Points

This cultivation manual describes a controversial method to enable two similar cultivators to actively strengthen each other. The closer their bloodlines resemble each other, the faster and more effective the results. When practiced to a higher stage, the cultivators can combine their power much more readily.

Eternal Love Bloodline Dual Cultivation cannot be practiced alone. It must be cultivated by a pair of individuals who share at least a partial bloodline relationship with each other. Those who have started to practice it will form a permanent bond of blood that will lead to severe consequences if forcefully broken.

Requirements:...

"This... this is the perfect complement to my Carmine System!"

It also sounded as if the knowledge contained in this enlightenment fruit would drive the Gemini Family to madness, but that was not important to Ves at the moment!

Right now, the mutual strengthening effects of his Carmine System were a mystery. Neither the mech nor the mech pilot employed any conscious techniques to enhance the benefits of their Blood Pact.

They just passed on each other's strengths through osmosis, which worked fine, but did not do much to tap the greater potential of his key invention!

With the knowledge that he possessed today, Ves interpreted the Blood Pact as a passive form of contract cultivation.

It did not do anything too exciting and probably took way too much time in order to produce powerful results.

This was not enough for Ves. He wanted to turn his Carmine System into a highly beneficial and extremely desirable component.

In an age where red humanity was destined to come under assault against an overwhelming amount of hostile aliens, Ves predicted that it would become more important than ever to mobilize a wider pool of available fighters and quickly make them as combat effective as possible!

If an upgraded version of the Blood Pact could allow ordinary people to become a lot stronger in a matter of months or years, then that would fully provide red humanity with a powerful way to slow down alien offenses!

"I have to get this fruit!"

Even though it was not part of his original plan, Ves bought it anyway.

"It's only 105 Ascension Points. I still have a lot more in reserve."

He instantly ingested the enlightenment fruit and closed his eyes as his formidable mind rapidly absorbed and internalized the extensive and elaborate cultivation processes.

His first impression was that it was worth the 105 Ascension Points he paid for this taboo knowledge.

Although a lot of the descriptions reminded him of the unorthodox practices of the Gemini Family, Ves eagerly delved into all of the secrets of combining blood and spirit in order to form a greater and much more powerful whole!

He quickly confirmed his initial idea that he could use this forbidden contract cultivation method as the basis of a more structural and deliberate version of his Blood Pact!

The Blood Pact Version 2.0 was bound to become at least three times more effective!

Venerable Jannzi Larkinson and Venerable Benjamin Larkinson would be able to get a lot more out of their living mechs once he updated their machines with his new adaptations!

He would get one step closer to increasing the value of his Carmine System!

"And that means I will get one step closer to realizing my design philosophy." He grinned.

A lot of technical hurdles remained before he could advance to Master Mech Designer. He had to refine its biological makeup, test it out on a lot of different mech designs and meticulously track the growth of every mech pilot who had bonded with a Carmine mech.

However, Ves at least possessed enough confidence that he would be able to amplify and optimize the Blood Pact component of his invention. This had always been the most mysterious and indecipherable part about the Carmine System, but with the help of this latest enlightenment fruit, he no longer felt there was as much mystery to it as before!

The biggest challenge was to combine the principles of the Eternal Love Method with elements of artifact cultivation.

"After all, one partner is a human while the other partner is a mech. The latter needs a way to derive a lot of growth from the Blood Pact."

He already had a possible choice on how to make that happen.

He directed his gaze towards another old enlightenment fruit that had showed up once again.

[Atmer Guardian Mantra]

Price: 299 Ascension Points

Imparts the complete mantra that enables talented individuals to cultivate their physical, mental and spiritual attributes. The mantra mainly centers around increasing the defenses of its practitioner, allowing them to withstand many attacks the more they practice its contents. Those who practice this mantra to the fullest will turn into gods that cannot be moved and are nearly impossible to break. The Atmer Guardian Mantra can only be fully practiced by humans that possess specific genes as well as biological modifications and have not practiced any other cultivation techniques. This enlightenment fruit allows an individual to ignore these conditions.

Requirements: Spirituality must be 0.4 or higher. Strength must be 1.4 or higher. Endurance must be 1.4 or higher. Must have affinity for earth, defense or mass.

Ves previously considered this enlightenment fruit to be a potential complement for a defensive mech pilot such as Venerable Jannzi, but now he looked at it a lot differently!

"This Atmar Guardian Mantra can serve as the basic template for a cultivation method for living mechs!"

Although this particular cultivation method lacked any explicit elemental or elemental traits, it was a comprehensive hybrid between qi cultivation and body cultivation with a strong focus towards defense!

"A mech never has enough defenses! If they become harder and harder to break as their cultivation progresses, they will be able to accompany their mech pilots a lot longer!"

Chapter 5067 Smithing Records

Ves gritted his teeth but eventually decided to pull the trigger.

The System instantly deducted 299 Ascension Points from his account from the moment he plucked the fruit from the tree!

Before he could spend time regretting this fairly expensive purchase, he quickly bit into the fruit and swallowed it without hesitation!

This time, Ves received a much greater rush of knowledge!

His mental and cognitive functions had improved enormously compared to a few years ago, so he was still able to keep up and integrate all of the insights and lessons he received at a rapid rate.

The useful knowledge contained within this fruit was much greater than the last one!

Even if the Atmer Guardian Mantra contained a lot of additional esoteric knowledge that was only relevant in a past age, Ves still learned a lot of sophisticated cultivation processes that were incredibly valuable!

They combined qi cultivation and body cultivation elements in a single cohesive and synergistic cultivation framework.

Many of them were either so advanced that Ves would never be able to deduce them himself or so ingenious that it could have only been invented through inspiration.

As usual, Ves fully felt it had been worthwhile to spend 299 AP on this fruit.

"In fact, I've obtained a bargain this time. One man's trash is another man's treasure. The actual value of this fruit of mine surpasses its list price!"

The reasons why he felt this way were myriad.

First, Ves gained a large quantity of high-quality building blocks and general cultivation knowledge. His understanding of what he came to call 'cultivation science' had progressed enormously after learning so many new cultivation tricks!

Second, the Atmer Guardian Mantra could serve as another useful template. He could hollow out anything that was too specific and fill up the void with all kinds of other cultivation processes in order to form a new variant cultivation method that was geared towards other purposes!

Third, pretty much every fit and healthy human with at least a modest amount of spiritual potential could get started on this cultivation method.

The amount of eligible practitioners used to be fairly small in the Age of Mechs, but now that red humanity was about to undergo widespread spiritual activation due to constant exposure to exotic radiation, the circumstances had changed!

A lot of his own clansmen would gradually become eligible to practice the Atmar Guardian Mantra!

Each of them would be able to consistently absorb the power of heaven and earth to gradually cultivate their own body, mind and spirit.

These were all vital and useful attributes in the Age of Dawn!

Of course, Ves would never make any of his subordinates practice this outdated cultivation method. It contained a lot of elements he didn't like and he also found it rather slow, demanding and inefficient compared to more modern advancements in cultivation science.

He intended to adapt and alter it so that he could invent a more appropriate cultivation method for all of his clansmen!

"The members of the Aduc Family won't be the only ones in my network who can engage in deliberate cultivation anymore by the time I am done!"

Fourth, although the Atmar Guardian Mantra was specifically geared towards human cultivation, Ves was confident he could combine it with elements of artifact cultivation in order to form a method specific for living mechs!

He might even go to his wife and propose to work together in order to incorporate her god body method into his exclusive living mech cultivation method!

His expression turned odd when he thought about his wife's most recent successful design application.

"Now that I think about it, Gloriana has actually begun her own research on artifact cultivation."

Her god body method practically fit the definition! Although it only focused on improving the material quality of her mechs, it was already impressive for her to be able to make so much progress without benefiting from any mystical inheritances such as Ves!

While Gloriana still had to grope in the dark without any teachers or textbooks to help her out, Ves could easily attain lots of cultivation-related knowledge by asking his mother or plucking another enlightenment fruit from the Tree of Possibilities!

"I should buy a fruit for her in order to help her out." He decided.

It was all well and good for her to keep figuring stuff out on her own, but her progress would fall too far behind if she had to keep researching and experimenting all by herself.

Ves needed all of his mechs but particularly the high-ranking ones to become stronger a lot faster. Her own innovations could play a useful role in accelerating the rise of powerhouses in his clan!

"I should take care of my own needs first, though."

He already spent 404 Ascension Points in a short amount of time, and he was far from done with his purchases!

He needed more knowledge to boost his understanding of spiritual engineering and cultivation science further!

"I still need fruits related to deity cultivation and artifact cultivation. If I have enough points left, I should also make sure to grab a qi cultivation method that can tap into a lot of different elements."

He quickly bumped into an incredibly attractive enlightenment fruit.

[Divine Blacksmith Records]

Price: 975 Ascension Points

Imparts a large collection of related smithing recipes and techniques developed by a Divine Blacksmith. The majority of techniques consist of special hammering methods that can impart metallic and organic materials with special properties. The smithing recipes contain many combinations that enable a craftsman to forge powerful materials with the infusion of special energies and materials into a work.

Although the description sounded simple, Ves did not underestimate the knowledge contained within!

This was among the most expensive and powerful enlightenment fruits produced by the Tree of Possibilities!

"A Divine Blacksmith, huh?"

That sounded like a True God oriented towards creation cultivation. It might even be a predecessor of a Star Designer!

Any core knowledge related to a True God was a treasure in other people's hands.

Ves had great confidence that he could use the gains from this fruit to advance much of his research and methods by leaps and bounds!

"In fact, it is much better to let Vulcan absorb this fruit instead of me. The heritage of a Divine Blacksmith suits him a lot better!"

Unfortunately, the price was just too high for Ves. In terms of cost-effectiveness, he could easily satisfy requirements by spending a lot less on cheaper enlightenment fruits!

The Divine Blacksmith Records was just too high-end at this time. It was an extravagant enlightenment fruit that would take a lot of time and effort for him to fully digest and convert into real gains.

He could not possibly set himself back by spending too much AP and delaying his acquisition of more essential fruits at this time.

He eventually shook his head and moved on. "Maybe I will revisit this decision in the future."

He already confirmed that the Tree of Possibilities occasionally rotated in old enlightenment fruits after they had disappeared for a while.

This meant that Ves always had the chance of plucking it in the future when he became more powerful and earned a lot more Ascension Points.

Ves eventually settled for a more modest and economical artifact cultivation method.

[Colica Sect Equipment Maintenance Sutra]

Price: 220 Ascension Points

Imparts a sutra as well as associated theories and techniques on the maintenance of personal weapons and equipment. The Colica Sect believes that equipment that is recently manufactured and unused in the circumstances they were made for cannot be relied upon.

The battlefield is the forge and the attacks launched by the opposing force are the hammer strikes. Only after undergoing repeated combat refining will surviving pieces of equipment have the capital to turn into artifacts of greater power.

The Colica Sect's unique sutra utilized by its blacksmiths is not only meant to facilitate the repair and restoration of damaged equipment, but can also increase their toughness and other properties through a combination of special methods.

"This is much more appropriate for my needs!"

Although it didn't sound nearly as comprehensive and high-level as the Divine Blacksmith Records, the Colica Sect Equipment Maintenance Sutra was a lot cheaper while also being highly relevant to his work!

Sure, this enlightenment fruit did not sound like it had anything to do with mechs or living products, but Ves was sure he could adapt the principles of this so-called Colica Sect to his mechs and mech designs!

"It would be best to change it so that the mechs can apply a version of this sutra to themselves instead of letting the maintenance crews do this stuff." Ves determined.

He could figure that out later.

Ves took the time to study the other enlightenment fruits that sounded like they were also tied to artifact cultivation, but he did not like them due to various reasons.

They were either too cheap which gave him little confidence that they would satisfy all of his requirements, or they demanded too many Ascension Points while stuffing his head full of too much irrelevant knowledge.

This one was just right.

"Buy."

Ves plucked the fruit and tossed it into his mouth.

Another burst of knowledge flooded into his mind. The quantity of theories and techniques was a lot, but a significant proportion of the input was made up of hard data that should ordinarily be stored in a database.

Ves harvested a lot of gains from this fruit. Just as he expected, the knowledge was both highly relevant and multipurpose.

Not only did he gain the building blocks he needed to cobble up a much more functional and fitting artifact cultivation method for his living mechs, he also gained a much greater understanding of blacksmithing and manual craftsmanship processes!

He especially gained a lot of competence in repairing damaged and broken mechs! He understood a lot more on how to preserve their valuable attributes while also imparting his machines with small improvements by imbuing the mechs with spiritual energy.

The more damaged the mech, the greater the room for mystical improvement!

"My chance of fabricating a masterwork mech should be even greater, especially if I upgrade an existing mech!"

The Colica Sect's survival of the fittest mentality towards equipment synergized well with his specialization towards living mechs.

So long as his products managed to survive the battlefield and grow for numerous years, they would be able to grow into much more powerful versions of themselves!

Ves smiled as he fully digested the knowledge contained in the latest fruit. He developed a much stronger desire to go back to his design lab and work on upgrading the Dark Zephyr and all of his other old expert mechs.

These older machines had gone through so many serious battles and accumulated so much growth that he knew that he could unlock a lot of potential if he reconstructed their frames!

However, all of that took a lot of time and effort. He needed to think carefully about whether to embark on any further design projects at this time.

"Let's get back to my search."

He had 625 Ascension Points left. He was willing to spend a large chunk of it on two more fruits, but he needed to make sure he left a healthy reserve in order to pay the rent for the Vault of Eternity and rent extra time in the Workshop of Creation.

Ves urgently needed a proper deity cultivation method.

The Orven Ritual Sacrifice Altar Design enlightenment fruit he ingested once taught him a little bit about this form of cultivation, but it hardly added anything to his understanding of cultivation science.

Compared to the methods of primordial humans and other races with rich spiritual inheritances, the crude and primitive deity cultivation methods of the orven race could not be relied upon!

If Ves did not have access to the Sacred Hearth which gave him direct access to his Divine Cores, he would have never been able to survive his attempt to create his own living divine artifact!

Now that he still had plenty of Ascension Points at his disposal, he became determined to do better!

It took a while, but he eventually found a decent fruit...

Chapter 5068 The Importance Of Reciprocity

Ves did not like deity cultivation.

The examples shown by his mother and the cultivation methods described by the numerous enlightenment fruits dangling from the Tree of Possibilities all emphasized the primary reason for his dislike.

The relationships between the 'deity' and its worshipers were too uneven!

Due to the considerable power imbalance between the two parties, the vastly more superior one held most if not all of the cards.

It was so easy for the deity to exploit its worshipers and demand them to give up much of what they possessed in value for a cultivator in exchange for paltry rewards.

In fact, a deity did not even have to do anything for its worshipers! The supposed god could simply sit back and continue to absorb faith or spiritual feedback while leaving its subjects completely in the dust!

"Even the more benign faiths tend to describe hands off relationships." Ves shook his head.

Gods had better things to do than to act as nannies. If their worshipers couldn't do anything without crying to their revered deities, then what was the benefit of keeping them around?

Besides, once gods started to attract a huge number of worshipers, it became unrealistic to attend to their spiritual needs in real-time!

Only the more benevolent and restricted gods might have reasons to do a decent job and respond to those who were truly in need, but even then they could never fully reciprocate all of the gains they received from their body of worshipers.

"Inequality is baked into the fabric of deity cultivation." Ves concluded. "No god can solve any problem, nor should they. People should ideally live their own lives without the meddling of nefarious or capricious gods."

Deity cultivation became intertwined with all kinds of messy beliefs and assumptions. The ethical problems and propensity for abuse were so enormous that Ves had to resist the urge to torch it from existence in its entirety!

"This is a cancer upon all of humanity and other races for that matter!"

His strong secularist ideology caused him to discount all of the positive benefits that deity cultivation could exert on a society.

Instead, he fixated on all of the possible abuses and expressed serious contempt towards anyone who used this method of cultivation to get ahead!

Even his mother did not escape his sights!

From what little Ves had seen from the Oblivion Empire, it gathered large amounts of desperate people who sought to break past their limitations. They somehow believed that the Lady of the Night could give them what they wanted.

Though his mother had selectively 'blessed' numerous lucky individuals including a notable quantity of mech pilots, the vast majority of her worshipers obtained little to nothing from their goddess!

Cynthia did not even bother to dress up the fact that she was exploiting her lowly minions. All of those gullible and foolish people who fought against the Abyss Empire and more terrible monsters on her behalf worked hard to gain her recognition and blessing, only to perish while fighting for another individual's cause.

Ves did not want to follow the example set by his mother. He understood that she was a product of her environment and that she had internalized an entirely different set of values that were incompatible to contemporary human society.

His design philosophy centered around the concept of Mutual Growth for good reasons. He had been raised as a modern citizen of a modest civic state. Not only that, but he had also inherited the values and principles of a mech designer.

One of the first lessons that any student of this profession learned in class was that mech designers existed to serve mech pilots.

By extension, mech designers existed to serve human society and humanity as a whole!

This was the essence of what creation cultivators should be. Unlike other types of cultivators, those who attained godhood through production had to set their minds on meeting the needs of their clients from beginning to end.

If there was no way that a creation cultivator could provide a positive benefit to their own society, then there was no basis for his existence!

"Deity cultivation is too vulnerable for abuse, yet... it can provide a positive benefit to society as well."

Deities could provide protection to a group of people.

Deities could provide guidance and teachings to elevate a society.

Deities could also help their subjects grow stronger and ultimately become god-like entities themselves!

"My own work should be good examples of this." Ves considered.

He found it rather ironic as much of his spiritual engineering work relied on this model of spiritual development.

His design spirits and his kinship networks all functioned properly because they received their sustenance from the spiritual feedback provided by lots of humans!

Although they all applied primitive and relatively rudimentary forms of deity cultivation, Ves considered them to be a lot fairer and more transparent than normal.

Whenever a mech pilot interfaced with a living mech, he supplied spiritual feedback to the design spirit.

However, this was not a unidirectional transaction.

In exchange for supplying spiritual feedback, the mech pilot benefited from the glow as well as additional benefits from the design spirit.

This was an equitable and sustainable win-win arrangement!

Both sides had reasons to keep engaging with each other. They both obtained what they needed without making any unreasonable sacrifices.

Ves did not want to break this mutually beneficial relationship structure. He could not allow himself to get indoctrinated by exploitative deity cultivation methods and drastically changed the way he operated!

He glanced at a particularly large and shining enlightenment fruit that exemplified everything he hated about deity cultivation.

[Karnasis Seed Planting Manual]

Price: 555 Ascension Points

Imparts a set of secret techniques that enables a practitioner to covertly plant demonic seeds into many different people. These demonic seeds will gradually merge with their recipients until they fully merge together.

The practitioner can employ various different techniques to manipulate the behavior of the seed bearers, although strong-willed individuals may be able to detect and resist contradictory compulsions. The practitioner can also harvest as much energy from them as desired. If seed bearers grow stronger, they can make greater sacrifices to their controller.

If a seed bearer perishes, the implanted seed can be harvested and absorbed by the practitioner. The matured demonic seed can also absorb the nutrients of the corpse on the spot to rapidly form a demonic tree that can spread a large amount of initial seeds that can be spread to a large group of nearby individuals.

Ves' expression turned uglier and uglier the more he read through this description. This deity cultivation method was one of the most blatant ones about exploiting the masses!

The so-called 'seed bearers' in this Karnasis Seed Planting Manual were all reduced to slaves by greedy and uncaring practitioners! The fact that the method used the word 'demonic' was a damning indictment of this enlightenment fruit!

"Cultivation involving multiple parties has to incorporate reciprocity in order to meet my standards."

In other words, a deity cultivation method had to incorporate contract cultivation aspects for the worshipers in order to make it fair enough for both sides.

As long as the so-called worshipers could engage in an explicit or implicit form of contract cultivation with their chosen deity, Ves would have much less objections to this practice.

This was his rule. The demand not only conformed with his principles, but also guaranteed that his work promoted his design philosophy.

After a considerable search, Ves eventually settled on one deity cultivation method that sounded the most equitable of the current selection of offerings. He also grew intrigued by the mechanisms incorporated in this rather creative method.

[Karma Liberation Sutra]

Price: 240 Ascension Points

Imparts a sutra and related knowledge on karma manipulation. Cause and effect ties all life together. Karma is the force that affects luck and existence. Cultivators can impose themselves upon the universe to a greater extent by accumulating more karma, but they will also become bound to it, thereby making it harder to break loose from their shackles.

The Karma Liberation Sutra can enable a practitioner to become more real without becoming imprisoned by a universe. The sutra encompasses techniques to generate karma by performing deeds that affect other individuals, which can be used to facilitate reincarnation and other processes. It also contains techniques to offset, transfer and resolve karma in order to liberate the practitioner from remaining indebted.

"It's a bit vague, but... I have a good feeling about this one." Ves spoke as he stared at the orange enlightenment fruit.

It gave the most positive and benevolent impression out of other comparable fruits. Its description might be a little vague and inadequate in many areas, but it conveyed an explicit sense of fairness, reciprocity, restraint and punishment.

This was the template that he sought to define every deity cultivation method for his design spirits and other comparable products!

Ves wanted all of his design spirits to grow stronger, but not by exploiting and sucking the energy out of their subjects.

If the cultivation method he designed for them tracked all transactions and added negative connotations to debt, then that was a clear way to ensure that the deity cultivation methods did not lead to excessive behavior!

"Buy!"

Ves instantly plucked and ingested the fruit without any further ado.

As he closed his eyes, he became immersed in brand-new mystical theories related to karma, cause and effect, reincarnation and other related topics.

The contents of this enlightenment fruit was vastly different from the other knowledge he had absorbed not too long ago. The lack of overlap indicated that this inheritance came from a significantly different culture or time period than the more general cultivation methods.

Ves questioned many of the Karma Liberation Sutra's assumptions. He did not know whether to believe that the main universe had an invisible karma tracking mechanism that tallied all of the good and bad karma accumulated by life forms. The sutra never provided any solid proof to back up all of the theories and techniques born from this key assumption.

However, the System did not charge 240 Ascension Points for nothing. Even if the sutra possessed faulty elements that did not accurately reflect reality, it was still good enough to be usable by people such as Ves!

With the mystical knowledge he learned in an instant, Ves applied it to himself.

"Damn."

He could vaguely sense the weight of all of the karma he accumulated so far.

It was thick and heavy beyond belief!

The Karma Liberation Sutra warned that the greater the entanglements and unresolved debts, the harder it would be for a pre-divinity cultivator to successfully break through and transcend into a True God!

Ves did not not really believe in this assumption. Mech designers and especially high-ranking ones affected the lives of uncountable amounts of people.

Whether their influence was positive or negative, it was impossible for any successful mech designer to avoid piling up karma!

The sutra issued dire warnings about accumulating too much negative karma.

When there wasn't enough positive karma to offset the bad stuff, a cultivator risked retribution!

"Wait a second." Ves suddenly paused. "Is all of that inexplicable lightning from the skies a manifestation of punishment borne out of negative karma?"

That would explain why he had to endure an exaggaratingly long lightning storm when he last broke through in the System Space.

While his 'punishment' turned out to be so pathetically weak that Ves ended up using it as a strengthening source, he could not assume it would remain this way in the future.

From all of the cultivation science he absorbed so far, he vaguely guessed that the strength of the so-called 'lightning tribulation' phenomenon scaled with the prevalence of the power of heaven in the environment.

In other words, the same lightning tribulation in the Milky Way might become a hundred times stronger and deadlier in Messier 87!

"I need to be more careful about this stuff in the future!"

Chapter 5069 Introduction To The Five Elements

Ves estimated that in the last half hour, he turned from a Novice into a... Journeyman in cultivation science.

His understanding of many of the fundamental theories related to deliberate cultivation had improved by leaps and bounds!

He managed to overcome one of his greatest shortcomings and blindspots in record time merely by ingesting a series of enlightenment fruits.

He felt a lot more confident about his ability to survive the coming troubles of the Age of Dawn.

Now that he along with the rest of red humanity was stuck in a dwarf galaxy that became flooded with exotic radiation, any relevant knowledge on how to make the most out of E energy radiation became incomparably precious.

His head happened to be stuffed with precious secrets on how to leverage spiritual energy in all kinds of fantastic and powerful ways!

His spiritual engineering capabilities had undergone an explosive rebirth.

No longer did he have to rely on shaky and incomplete homebrew theoretical frameworks to develop his products.

He could rely on much more mature and detailed theories to form deeper interactions with more promising phenomena.

Ves already secured the essentials he needed to upgrade all of his design spirits, his companion spirits, his living mechs and a lot of other powerful works!

He quickly checked his remaining balance.

"I still have 385 Ascension Points at my disposal."

This granted him room to obtain one more decent enlightenment fruit.

Although he already obtained all of the basics, Ves wanted to obtain an extra package of theories related to harnessing different spiritual attributes.

The cultivation methods that he obtained from the Tree of Possibilities did not go in depth in this particular direction. They were all fixated on other concepts and goals to spare any room for superfluous elements.

"Let's see."

The Tree of Possibilities still offered hundreds of unplucked enlightenment fruits. Ves had no idea where the System obtained all of this secret knowledge and inheritances, but he did not feel like looking a gift horse in the mouth.

He quickly scanned through several viable options before his sight settled on the most attractive choice.

[Beginner Five Elements Spells Manual]

Price: 250 Ascension Points

Imparts a moderate selection of basic qi spells along with their associated theories based on the five elements: wood, fire, earth, metal, water. These qi-based techniques are organized by difficulty, complexity and other requirements and can be practiced in sequence to form a systematic repertoire of solutions.

This beginner manual offers methods to activate and make effective use of the advantages of each of the five elements. It does not contain more advanced techniques that cover the rich and varied methods to combine multiple elements to produce compound effects such as strengthening, weakening, regulation or transformation.

The price of this enlightenment fruit was greater than he was comfortable with. His balance would drop to a concerning level if he exchanged for the Beginner Five Elements Spells Manual, leaving him with an inadequate buffer against emergencies.

"It's really difficult to earn so many Ascension Points again!"

The Mission Hall demanded a lot of crazy and impractical actions from Ves in order to earn additional AP. It drove Ves crazy as he did not want to engage in work that went against his own nature.

He shook his head. He could think about earning Ascension Points and building up a healthy reserve once again at a later date.

"Buy."

Different from the enlightenment fruits that Ves bought before, this one did not come with any cultivation methods.

This was a benefit rather than a shortcoming. It meant that it was devoid of a lot of unnecessary and superstitious associations. It simply did what it said. It imparted a general theoretical framework on the five elements. It also taught a whole bunch of simple qi manipulation techniques that were directly based on this framework.

Ves deduced that the manual was originally designed with a broad and varied target audience in mind.

All kinds of cultivators could read through the manual and pick and choose which spells they wanted to learn.

The expectation was that most of them would settle for learning a selection of spells that aligned with their most dominant and compatible elements.

It was not necessary for a cultivator to master the full repertoire of spells, especially if they were based on incompatible elements!

Only a tiny proportion of talented cultivators had any need or desire to explore all five elements.

Due to the working mechanisms of the enlightenment fruit, Ves not only familiarized himself with the full range of spells contained within the Beginner Five Elements Spells Manual, but also gained at least a basic degree of proficiency in all of them! He felt he could manipulate his own spiritual energy as well as the ambient spiritual energy around him to produce all kinds of interesting effects!

He raised his hand and recited a mantra in his mind while at the same time shaping spiritual energy in a specific pattern.

The ambient spiritual energy around him eventually formed into a small fireball, which he subsequently threw onto the ground next to the Tree of Possibilities!

Pfff.

"That's it? How useless."

While Ves was impressed by the mechanisms that effectively converted spiritual energy into a real physical fireball, he did not take the spell itself too seriously!

If he wanted to cause harm, he was better off materializing the Amastendira and pulling the trigger on his target.

"Humans are tool users. My technological products can easily outdo any of the spells that I have learned."

Ves tried out a few other spells in order to confirm how powerful they were under the current circumstances.

He managed to levitate his Hammer of Melody above his palm, but couldn't lift anything heavier.

He managed to condense the moisture in the air into enough drops of water to quench his thirst.

"From this day onwards, I can rightfully regard myself as a spiritual sorcerer!"

Of course, this was just a useless flight of fancy. Why the hell would Ves waste his time on these useless magic tricks? Human civilization was primarily based around technology, and its development in this area vastly exceeded the results produced by primitive and outdated 'spells'!

What he truly valued was acquiring the foundational theories and the underlying mechanisms of all of these spells.

The five elements no longer sounded as mysterious and inscrutable to him as before.

"I kind of understand now why the Sacred Scrolls come in five different editions."

Each element possessed a lot of versatility and potential, and that was when they were used by themselves.

Once combined, they could produce vastly greater results!

A lot of new elements and effects could be produced by combining the five elements in different ways!

It was a pity that the fruit did not go into detail in these more advanced theories.

"I probably won't be able to afford it anyway." He muttered.

He took a brief look at his remaining balance and winced.

"Damn. There is only 135 AP left!"

That was a pathetic sum compared to what he had before. Under normal circumstances, Ves could only earn a single Ascension Point per completed mech design.

He would have to work for a long time in order to break past the 1000 AP barrier again!

"I need to go on another Mission spree if I want to buy another batch of enlightenment fruits." He frowned.

He had almost completely exhausted this opportunity to take advantage of the System and quickly absorb a huge amount of rare and valuable knowledge.

It would probably take a long time before he could do this again!

Still, he felt really good about his choices today. Each of the enlightenment fruits he plucked from the Tree of Possibilities had been worth the Ascension Points he spent on them and more.

Now that his head was filled with multiple different theoretical frameworks related to cultivation science, Ves became more eager than ever to formulate his own cultivation methods!

When he looked back at the Imaginary Universe Method he derived for Blinky, he gained a completely different impression of his own work.

It was as if he had graduated from a third-class mech designer to a second-class mech designer all of a sudden.

Whenever a second-class mech designer examined a relatively crude and simple third-class mech design, they would always be able to spot many shortcomings and missed opportunities!

"It's too primitive!"

Although he felt that the method should still be able to work, it possessed so many holes that all kinds of unpredictable and unexpected accidents might occur if Blinky truly tried to form an internal universe!

For better or worse, Ves had to proactively address all of these holes before they could ever become a problem.

Several hours went by as Ves continually drew onto a lot of scattered theories to expand on the model of the imaginary universe.

He not only incorporated his recently obtained Urvenk Obelisk more deeply into the fabric of the imaginary universe, but also defined a lot of natural rules and phenomena with the help of the other theories that he had learned.

For example, he invested a lot of extra time into integrating the five elements into the basic operation of the imaginary universe.

Ves knew it was unrealistic to expect his imaginary universe to function exactly as the universe he lived in, but the closer it mimicked physical reality, the more comprehensive and multi-faceted it would become!

"This is the best I can do." He sighed as he completed the second iteration of his first genuine cultivation method.

He still felt a strong desire to start developing a bunch of other cultivation methods for his living mechs and so on, but all of that could wait.

What he desired the most right now was to present his work to his mother and obtain validation from her feedback!

He exited the System Space, causing him to fully reconnect with reality.

He shifted his focus to the Milky Way and immediately directed Veronica to enter Cynthia's meditation room again.

Strangely enough, Veronica was able to pick up on a lot more details than before!

Her much greater comprehension of cultivation science as well as her considerably greater familiarity of the five elements allowed her to pierce through the fog that surrounded her mother!

A strong atmosphere of wood surrounded the Oblivion Empress.

The meditation room was made with natural materials that had been processed in a way that effectively contained and isolated the potent energies to prevent them from contaminating the rest of the Throne of Light!

He could make so many more observations and even learn a few useful insights about his mother, but this was not his goal at the moment.

"Mother?"

"Yes, my child?" The glowing woman opened her eyes and smiled at the approaching cyborg cat.

"I used the cultivation method you gifted to me and modified it based on what I have learned from you as well as the System. Can you take a look at my work and point out its shortcomings?"

"Sure."

Cynthia quickly skimmed through all of the pages of the virtual document projected by Veronica.

Her expression was a lot more serious as she evaluated all of the cultivation processes that had been mixed and matched together.

"This... is far more detailed and complex than I expected from you." She said. "I can see clear influences from several advanced cultivation methods and cultural inheritances. The way you have carelessly mixed them together with no thought about their historical contradictions is... interesting. I can clearly tell you treated this as an engineering project. There is a surprising amount of science underpinning much of the steps, and the way you have structured them is logical, transparent and difficult to misinterpret."

Veronica proudly nodded. "I see no reason to deliberately obfuscate my method and mix it with all kinds of vague and superstitious nonsense. Cultivation can be treated as a science as far as I am concerned. You can tell me if I am wrong."

"You are not wrong per se. You are merely flying against tradition. This is good, so long as you remember that there may be good reasons why cultivators of the past have formed different assumptions and beliefs."

"Can you tell me if I overlooked anything important in my cultivation method?"

"Ah. I can do that." Cynthia said. "Your intention to form an entire universe that initially consists of the power of heaven and earth is truly bold and ambitious. I can observe that you have tried your best to address many flaws and make it as viable as possible. While you have done a good job at that, you have missed a few vulnerabilities that are immediately obvious to other cultivators such as myself."

"What did I do wrong, mother?"

The resurrected woman smirked. "The way in which Blinky is supposed to grow his imaginary universe is to indiscriminately absorb large quantities of qi, or spiritual energy as you call it. Have you ever considered what would happen if some of that absorbed qi isn't as harmless as you think? What if it is a parasite or a destructive element? How will you be able to cope if a virus or a hostile force has infiltrated your precious little universe?"

"Uhh... I guess I didn't think about that." Veronica admitted.

Chapter 5070 Imaginary Universe Method Version 3.0

His mother served as an invaluable resource and teacher to Ves.

She patiently went over all of the flaws and shortcomings of the Imaginary Universe Method Version 2.0.

Though she could be merciless about picking up all of the stupid mistakes and dangerous constructions in his work, she had good reasons to adopt such a stern tone!

"You need to hold yourself to a higher standard, my child." The woman said as she lightly spanked Veronica's metal bum. "If an engineer makes a serious mistake in the design of a shuttle and it somehow doesn't get noticed by subsequent inspections, he will have blood on his hands. The same applies to cultivation as well. You are playing with life and death with each cultivation method you

create. I do not mind too much if you develop them for ordinary people, but I will not permit you to be so careless when your life and wellbeing are directly at stake! Do better, or you will make your mother truly angry!"

"Myaow! I will do better, mother!"

Cynthia somehow made Ves feel as if he had been reduced to a child again. It was frankly embarrassing for a Senior Mech Designer and a father of three lovely children to feel this way.

Nonetheless, there was a childish and more innocent part of Ves that profoundly enjoyed these mother-and-son interactions.

He felt as if they were making up for lost opportunities.

As much as Ves felt a lot more confident about his mastery of cultivation science, his mother's feedback quickly put him back in his place!

Compared to a relative newcomer like Ves, an older and much more powerful True God possessed a wealth of understanding that went far deeper than anything he could have imagined!

She illuminated all kinds of different problems that Ves had never thought about due to his lack of depth and experience in formal cultivation.

Fortunately, Ves was largely able to invent his own solutions once his mother identified many of these issues.

He addressed the very real risks of hostile intrusion in multiple ways, from setting up a spiritual filter to adding internal defense mechanisms that automatically hunted down intruders that did not belong.

He also attempted to develop solutions to other problems such as elemental imbalances and restoration after suffering catastrophic damage.

His mother even took matters in her own hands at times whenever she grew dissatisfied with his amateurish and inadequate work!

Soon enough, they thoroughly perfected, optimized and expanded on the cultivation method presented by Ves.

Compared to its last iteration, the Imaginary Universe Method Version 3.0 was a lot safer, stabler and more reliable than ever before!

It might not add that much additional power or versatility, but it fully utilized the conditions and resources at hand to produce progressively greater and more exaggerated results!

Once the two completed their exhaustive revision effort, Cynthia held Veronica in her arms and began to look concerned.

"I respect your decisions, Ves, but this is a step that you cannot undo once you make it. Once your companion spirit creates his own new and constantly expanding universe, it is nearly impossible to change to another cultivation method. The only way Blinky can proceed from that point onwards is to modify and expand on his current method, but there are clear limits to how much he can deviate from his original direction."

Veronica let out a sigh as she relaxed in her mother's arms. "I have already spent a lot of time thinking about this and I am sure about my decision. I am happy with this configuration. It may be extravagant and unreasonable in many ways, but I am willing to endure the initial difficulties in order to gain a much larger payoff in the later years. Don't forget that I need to accumulate an enormous amount of power and resources in the coming decades in order to prepare for the inevitable arrival of alien invaders from Messier 87."

Ves did not fear the native aliens of the Red Ocean all that much. Even if the closure of the greater beyonder gate caused red humanity to become incredibly outnumbered all of a sudden, the Red Two still possessed a lot of effective combat power.

The Red Association and the Red Fleet would definitely do all of the heavy lifting when it came to defending red humanity's space!

What Ves truly worried about was whether the Red Two still possessed the qualifications to resist the extragalactic invaders from M87 a few decades later.

Ves needed to be ready to either give the Red Two assistance to prevent red humanity from going extinct.

Alternatively, he might have to build a powerful enough fleet to run the hell away from the Red Ocean before he and his clan could get hunted down by unimaginably powerful alien invaders!

His mother still had issues with Blinky's cultivation choices.

"Your Imaginary Universe Method is a pure qi cultivation method." She stated.

"Yes, that's right. I tried to keep it as contained as possible. What's the problem?" Veronica asked.

"You can easily incorporate deity cultivation in your imaginary universe method. It will not detract too much from the existing processes. Whether you make it so that Blinky derives energy from getting worshiped by your fellow clansmen or the native spiritual life forms that will come to inhabit his internal universe, you can still implement solutions that can speed up his cultivation."

Veronica knew what his mother was talking about. That did not mean the cyborg cat had to agree with her elder!

"No. I am not going to entangle Blinky with this kind of stuff. Deity cultivation is all well and good, but I don't want Blinky to become overdependent on other people. This may be my only incarnation that can remain fully self-sufficient. He can do well in any location with enough concentrations of ambient spiritual energy. I don't want Blinky's development to become warped by the biases and preconceptions of third parties."

The greatest danger and shortcoming of deity cultivation was that the god in question could get contaminated by the ideas and emotions of his own worshipers.

This was the inevitable consequence of deriving a great amount of growth and cultivation process by absorbing spiritual energy from other living sources!

In contrast, ambient spiritual energy was a lot more neutral and less opinionated due to the fact that it was mostly unowned background radiation.

"I already have Vulcan if I want to derive growth from deity cultivation." Veronica added. "He is pretty popular among dwarves. I am sure that I can develop a highly suitable deity cultivation method for him that will give full play to his own unique conditions."

His mother looked thoughtful. "You are correct. I understand your logic. Vulcan is not as close to your main self as Blinky, so any undue mental influences will not affect your real self that much due to the greater separation."

Vulcan had already changed considerably since his birth.

The exponentially greater amount of dwarves that prayed to the supposed God of Dwarves, Mechs and Craftsmanship resulted in a flood of messy spiritual feedback!

The input grew so enormous that Vulcan sympathized a lot more with the dwarves than humans nowadays!

They chatted a bit more about what sort of cultivation methods that Ves should prepare for his specific incarnations.

"You need to worry about your development on this side as well, Veronica." Cynthia said as she tapped the cyborg cat's head. "I cannot help you as much in this regard because I can feel that your cat body has partially embarked on a path of body cultivation based on phasewater."

"I will figure it out." Veronica stated with a bit less confidence than before. "I am hoping to get my hands on a few phase lords and phase whales so that I can study how they work. I know that I will have to get my hands on a lot of phasewater in order to continually expand the volume of my full physical body. Are you able to materialize phasewater out of energy?"

The mother pressed her lips.

"I am working on it, baby. Phasewater is a special exotic, and it is much more difficult to reproduce than many other high-grade materials. Water is not my main element, and I am still in the process of mastering it. There is no reason for you to be concerned. The stolen crown will provide considerable help."

That was right. His mother had partially managed to capture the authority of the Water Scroll. Though Ves had no idea how that benefited her exactly, it was not that big of a stretch to think that her mastery over the element of water would skyrocket in the future!

Anyway, now that Ves got what he wanted from his mother, he directed his main focus back to the Red Ocean.

He couldn't wait to initiate Blinky's new cultivation method!

He headed down to his private lab and workshop and entered an enclosed chamber for safety reasons.

Ves briefly considered whether it would be prudent to call for a few expert mechs to respond to any possible emergencies, but he decided against it as he did not think it would matter.

Although the process of creating an entirely new internal space was an inherently dangerous process, the Imaginary Universe Method Version 3-0 had been optimized and improved upon by a highly knowledgeable True God!

"Nothing should go wrong."

Even if he was wrong, it was not a bad idea to feel overconfident. Exotic radiation responded to his own thoughts and emotions. This meant that if he was convinced that a procedure would work, then reality might work a little extra to make sure the desired outcome took place!

"It's really strange, but whatever. Come out, Blinky!"

"Mrow!"

The Star Cat looked a lot more enthused than ever. After years of experiencing gradual growth through natural cultivation, the companion spirit was set to become the first of his kind to practice a formal method!

Since Blinky was just another personality of Ves, the companion spirit did not need to spend any time studying the Imaginary Universe Method.

The cat already understood it as well as Ves himself!

The method was not that difficult for the most part. It was designed to operate consistently in the background in almost the same way as natural cultivation.

The biggest complication was that it was quite difficult and potentially dangerous to get started!

An aged and damaged stone obelisk suddenly appeared next to Ves!

Seconds later, several tough and reinforced barrels filled with phasewater materialized into the chamber!

Ves was willing to invest too kilograms of pure phasewater for several reasons. He wanted to reduce the difficulty of forming a new universe and boost the initial expansion of its volume!

There was no need to add any other ingredients to the mix because Blinky could rely on absorbing vast quantities of ambient spiritual energy to make up for the rest.

"Let's start."

"Mrow mrow."

The purple companion spirit closed his eyes and began to devour the surrounding ambient spiritual energy.

An increasingly larger suction formed around Blinky as the cat continually accumulated and compressed the gathered energies.

Time passed by as Blinky began to struggle to contain so much excess energies. Most of it escaped from his grasp, but the cat persevered because he needed to obtain as much juice as possible to generate enough force to successfully open up a new space!

As the cat slowly reached critical mass, Blinky finally opened up his glowing eyes.

The suction vortex around the spiritual cat suddenly grew so strong that from the moment Blinky opened his maw, he successfully managed to devour both the Urvenk Obelisk as well as the barrels of phasewater!

The cat had gathered all of the ingredients he needed to form his new internal space!

"Mrow mrow mroooooow!"

The cat glowed increasingly brighter and more energetic as he engaged in an irreversible process.

This proceeded onwards for several tense and nerve-wracking minutes until a massive explosion took place in an entirely different dimension and space!

BANG!