

Once the conversation with Sarah ended, I immediately began looking through the market to find the ascension method that she had mentioned. When I was finding the general information before, I had previously noticed that the individual methods had also been for sale, though I had not really looked at their price tags.

It didn't take long for me to find what I wanted, thanks to Sarah having given me the name of the method. "Divine Forge... ten thousand points?!" My eyes went wide when I saw the number attached to the item. For simply buying information, this was quite a lot, double the entire price for the 'common' information bundle.

Thankfully, I still had a rather considerable balance from when I defeated Grudge. Thus, after taking a deep breath, I bit the bullet and bought the information. Chel's eyes gleamed as she watched a blue spherical gem descending from above, coming to rest in my hands.

However, instead of handing it over to her immediately, I focused my thoughts on it. Although I didn't take enough time to study the entire thing, I allowed the information to flow through my mind to copy it into three identical crystals. Udon had shown me how to make these long ago, so there was no real problem even if I took my time to slowly study it later.

One information crystal I sent off to Tubrock's forge, and another I sent to Udon's room. Meanwhile, I held the final one myself, handing the original over to Chel. "From how my friend described this method, it should be a lot easier to automate than the three steps."

"Thanks!" Chel nodded her head quickly, grabbing the sphere and injecting her thoughts into it. It was clear that she was rapidly studying the content within, her brows furrowing. "Some of these materials are pretty hard to come by, but it shouldn't be a problem with your Boundless Caravan. It does mean we'll have to charge a small fortune for godhood, though."

"Thankfully, the risk factor is almost completely removed with this method. As long as the necessary ingredients are all gathered, the worst case scenario is that someone's divine spark is wasted in the event of a failed forging."

I gave a small nod, glad that this method was at least not as troubling as the original. Though, now it meant that I had to seriously start considering what I wanted my third domain to be. Originally, I had thought it would be years before I had to worry about that, but it seemed that things were moving faster than I expected.

"I'll let you get back to it, then." I nodded towards Chel. She blinked, glancing behind herself to see the movie that we had previously been watching. After letting out a sound of realization, she hurriedly left the room so that we could resume it.

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Roughly five minutes after Chel had partially tuned out her surroundings, her eyes regained their former clarity. "I've got it!" She said, startling the gathered assistants with her sudden declaration.

"So, the Keeper will release a new ascension method soon?" Thea asked hopefully, her kitsune ears dropping when Chel shook her head. Only to stand on end again with her next words.

"No, I mean I've got it now!" Chel jumped to her feet, going over to one of the whiteboards that had been used to write down the formulas for the previous iteration of their attempted divinity program. Without any hesitation, she erased the entire board, grabbing a marker and quickly writing down a list.

"One kilogram of raw orichalcum, six hundred grams of divine gold dust infused with a fire property, three dead sea pearls infused with ice enchantments, and six petals of a holy rose. The hammer needs to be made with an alloy constructed from orichalcum, mithral, and silver. Furthermore, it has to be ki-forged with a durability increase option." Chel began listing off one requirement after another, looking as if she were talking about a recipe for crafting a special magical item rather than ascending to godhood.

After discussing the material and hammer requirements, she went into the energies needed, listing their requisite components and fusion methods for each. Standing nearby, James watched the process curiously, his eyes starting to go wide once she got into the energy components. It had to be known that this was one of his primary specialties, so he was able to notice something once he saw the list. "Chel... is this what I think it is?"

"If you think that this is the recipe to turn someone into a god, then yes!" Chel answered with a playful grin, finally setting down the marker. "We'll need to run a few tests in order to find the way to automate the process, but the materials shouldn't be hard for us to buy off the caravan. Thankfully, the divine gold that recently appeared in Sanctum appeared on the materials list, meaning that it would have otherwise been a more complicated recipe."

James nodded his head, stroking his chin at that. "This won't be enough for an already existing god, will it? How did you get him to buy the recipe if it won't let him advance himself?"

Chel stuck her tongue out playfully, turning the whiteboard around and beginning to list a new set of ingredients. "Blood from a divine spirit, tears of a stone giant, and the crystal heart of a ruby salamander. Mix the blood and tears together, crush the heart into dust, and mix them all together. Soak a trace of divinity in it for one hour, constantly washing it with this energy formula..."

She began drawing out another energy list, before continuing. "And all native domains will be washed out for the process to be undergone naturally. Though, the increased size of the divinity means that all components for the forging process have to be tripled."

“Blood from a divine spirit... there’s only one divine spirit around that we can ask for something like that.” He said with a sigh, knowing that was one material that they couldn’t simply gain from the void, due to its inherent divine properties. “Looks like Scarlet is going to have final say over any deities getting extra domains. At least for now, that is.”

While every god *had* a divine spirit, there was only one god that *was* a divine spirit in the current world. Until another one ascended, this meant that Scarlet would be able to either choose whether or not to accept letting deities gain another domain, or even set a price that they had to pay to acquire her blood. Given her status, it was hard to imagine what exactly she would choose to do.

Furthermore, the option of forcibly taking her blood wasn’t feasible, since her divinity would only take the form of blood if she actively wished to do so. “I’ll open talks with her.” James said, shaking his head. “At the very least, we can listen to her requirements, if she has any. Just to make sure, but this won’t lead to anyone becoming a subordinate deity to her, will it?”

Chel shook her head at that. “Not according to the information. Since the blood is only used for pre-existing deities, their natural status will remain unaffected by her ‘interference’. However, it is possible to make a new god your subordinate if a god is the one that does the forging, and purposely injects their own divinity during the process. Once we have the process automated, we won’t need to worry about anything like that.”

James nodded his head, but soon saw Chel walking towards the door of the lab. Arching an eyebrow, he couldn’t help but speak up. “Where are you going?”

“To get the first batch of materials!” Chel responded with a wide smile. “I’m currently the only one that knows the forging process, and you *did* say that I could do it once we understood how to do so. So I’m going to refine my own divine spark in front of all of you so that you can learn it firsthand and commit it to memory.”

James opened his mouth as if wanting to refute her, before simply letting out a groan. He knew that there was no point in arguing with her right now, so he simply closed his eyes. *Goddess of Ki, may I have a moment of your time?*

*It’s rare for someone like you to call, researcher.* The reply was surprisingly prompt, more so than when James normally contacted a deity... not that he did often. *What do you need? I’m a little preoccupied at the moment.*

*I need a ki-forged forging hammer made according to a very specific blueprint. Would it be fine for me to send it to Bloodhaven to have it made?* Bloodhaven was known as easily the best when it came to forging with ki, so it was only natural for him to send the requests through them.

*Yes, that would be fine. There was really no need for you to directly contact me about this.* Her tone was understandably annoyed, seeing this as a rather small business transaction that did not require her direct attention.

*There is... one other thing. We have found a method for gods to obtain an additional domain, but doing so requires some of your blood. That was the main reason that I had to go through you for all of this.*

This time, there was silence over the connection for several long minutes, James naturally worrying that he had been outright rejected. After all, how many people would want to give up their blood just to let others become more powerful?

*This recipe... Scarlet's voice responded after James had practically given up. You say that it will allow a deity to advance with an additional domain? If so, I will offer my consent and supply four portions. These portions are to be reserved for myself, the two deities serving the Citadel, and the Keeper himself. Additional portions will be handled on a case by case basis. Is this acceptable?*

James blinked, slowly nodding his head. Yes, *it's fine*. In truth, he was simply glad that she was willing to agree to listen to the request at all.

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"Scarlet, is everything alright?" Elisae glanced over at her friend curiously. Scarlet had gone quiet for a few minutes while they waited for Kiria Sorin to return. This period of quiet wasn't entirely out of the ordinary for her, but she felt a faint disturbance in Scarlet's energy.

When she looked over, she saw a wide, almost goofy grin on Scarlet's face, causing Elisae to flinch back in alarm. "Heheh... I can finally contribute." Scarlet muttered under her breath in a far more childish tone than Elisae had ever heard her use.

While James thought that Scarlet was on the verge of refusing, in truth she was simply ecstatic. This would be her first direct contribution to the Keeper's personal strength, and the strength of the Sky Citadel. Furthermore, this was a contribution that only she could provide, something that nobody else in the world could replace.

This made the Empress of Bloodhaven absolutely giddy, having to stop herself from extracting a large supply of blood from her divinity to send it over right away. After all, she didn't know how large each portion needed to be. Was it only a drop, a liter? Once she knew how large each portion was, she would immediately gather the four portions promised to send to James.

"Scarlet? Scarlet, did something happen?" Elisae's eyes went wide in alarm, bringing her hand over to wave in front of Scarlet's face. Scarlet simply looked over at Elisae with that same

euphoric expression, grabbing her friend and giving her the biggest hug that her small frame could manage.

“Everything’s great! Couldn’t be better!” She called out. “I just got some really amazing news, that’s all.”

“A-Ah... I’m really happy for you.” Elisae chuckled somewhat awkwardly, patting Scarlet on the back.