

When I forwarded the information to Aurivy, she was naturally excited to hear about what Sarah had discovered. The system that she had created had the possibility to open up new avenues of growth for my world, without us having to suffer an initial loss or drastically change our world. This was something that she hadn't even imagined, and she immediately declared that she would fully devote herself to researching this subject.

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James sat down in his lab, everyone else having already left. It had been a few days since his meeting with Speaker Thorn, but he had been quite busy overseeing the production of the Pilot's Band in that time. He had yet to receive the opportunity to look over the information that she had previously passed to him.

Now that things were starting to settle down more, he waved his hand to summon the cube from a nearby cabinet, placing it down on the table before him. Through his senses, he was able to detect the method of activating the device, one finger sliding along an almost invisible circle along the right side.

Afterwards, the top of the cube opened, projecting a screen filled with rows upon rows of data. These energies did not have the common names that he was familiar with, so he had to personally decrypt them with the information he knew. That was aside from the basic four, which were thankfully labeled properly.

The rest of the energies were sorted by their date of discovery. As an example, Energy 0001 which was listed as equal parts ki and mana could obviously be inferred to mean chakra. As he deciphered these energies, he grabbed a notebook from his desk and began writing down the reference names.

There were some energy combinations that were still used as components in other energy types. And, while it was understandable for a machine-like intelligence, or another sort of program that could automatically sift through the data, it wouldn't make much sense when a normal person saw that Energy 093 and 045 needed to be mixed with 012 at a ratio of Three-Two-Four. It was much simpler to understand once he converted their names into what he was familiar with.

As he read through the information, he had to admit that the universe which the Metong came from had a truly extensive history. Aside from the Metong themselves, none of the other races had been purchased by the current Keeper. To make up for that fact, evolution progressed in two primary directions.

The first direction was to naturally reinforce the body over countless generations. This was something that could be seen from the heroc, though their bodies only grew more extreme as

they leveled up. Due to their higher starting point, they actually had a lower level limit before they were forced to either use the Perfection Chamber or cultivate their own energy forms.

This was actually a rather common method for evolution throughout the universe, and many races born under such dire circumstances would find themselves experiencing it firsthand. The other option, however, was far more rare but could serve to benefit all races.

This method was the evolution of energy. This was the path that James' own race had taken in Fyor. Instead of evolving the physical body, it was the energy that evolved, until one day when it reached a point where the energy could replace the flesh entirely.

With a galaxy of possibilities, there would be countless variations of both options. Whenever the Metong discovered a race with a new, unique energy type, it was clear that they would go to great lengths to understand the properties of that energy in an attempt to replicate it for future research.

With so many discoveries, there were even many that James himself had never seen. Thankfully, each one had a description of their fundamental effect along with the recipe and identification code. With that, even if he couldn't recognize the energy himself, it wouldn't be too hard for him to infer some details.

For hours he stared at the information within the cube, noting down anything, whether he was familiar with it or not. In the end, he discovered that while there were some energies that he was not familiar with, there were similarly some that he knew which were not recorded. This brought him a sense of pride at being able to unearth some secrets that even such a vast civilization had yet to encounter.

Just as he was thinking that, he came across another energy. One which caused him to jolt upright in his chair, his eyes practically shining.

Energy 2934: 1 unit of Energy 0894, 2 units of Energy 1015, 19 units of Energy 0389, 50 units of Natural Energy.

Fundamental Effect: Trace evolutionary traits to genetic source, isolate the genetic code, and allow ease of mutation.

When James found this information in the database, he immediately grew excited. Closing his eyes, he focused on sending a message through mana towards the queen. "Lady Bria, I have a need to contact the person who passed me information the other day, Speaker Thorn. Do you perhaps have some way that I could reach out to her?"

The message took a moment before it was responded to, no doubt catching the queen by surprise. That, or she was sleeping... However, it did eventually return as a voice projected into James' mind. *I have a communication device that I can use to call her. Would it be easier to just have her pay you a visit?*

He thought about that for a moment, before nodding his head in acceptance and agreeing to her suggestion. Having a face to face conversation would probably make the conversation far easier to manage. And with that settled, the queen told him that Speaker Thorn was on her way

*Is she really so free?* James wondered to himself, before shaking his head. More likely, everyone that she would normally partake in negotiations with was currently resting, so he simply picked a good time to reach out to her.

After roughly ten minutes, James heard a knock on his door. With a wave of his hand, the door opened to reveal the silver form of the woman he had encountered the other day. "Hello, Researcher James!"

"It's good to see you again, Speaker Thorn." James spoke in an honest tone, inviting her inside. Once she was in, he closed the door behind her. "I have been going over some of the information you sent to me before, and I would like to ask you some questions."

"Certainly!" Speaker Thorn carried a wide smile on her face, looking at the screen projected above the metal cube. "You are almost finished with the two-thousand series energies, so soon? I must say, you are quite diligent in your work. You have almost reached the end of what our civilization has encountered."

"It helps that I know a few of them already." James shook his head, gesturing her over. "This one, Energy 2934... can you tell me a bit more about it?"

Thorn blinked, but nodded her head and observed the screen for a moment. "I was not personally a member of the team which encountered this race. Therefore, my knowledge is somewhat limited. However, there was a public report on the matter after the energy was understood, and I found it quite remarkable for organic races. Unfortunately, it serves little effect for those without a carbon-based organic structure."

"The world which gave birth to this energy was one populated by numerous monsters with a level range between eight hundred and one thousand. However, the sapient species possessed a body level of only five hundred at their base form. Logically speaking, they should not have been able to survive in such a hostile environment without reinforcing their own bodies."

"That was when we discovered this energy. As their civilization was only level three, we investigated to determine their value as a member of the Network. They were a very violent race, one that had no problem with killing any lifeform that they encountered."

“Then, after they killed the lifeform, they would use this energy to identify the evolutionary advantages of the slain organism and splice those characteristics into their own genetic code. For a race that had yet to develop digital storage to understand the basics of genetics was already quite a surprise to us.”

“Through our observations and experimentations, we discovered that the changes brought about by this energy were only temporary. Upon the death of the user, the energy would be dispersed, reverting the affected creature to its original form. However, while the creature was alive, its genetic code would serve as a blueprint capable of creating a new creature that truly carried those characteristics.”

“You mean... selective breeding? Or cloning?” James asked curiously, turning his head to regard Speaker Thorn.

“Closer to the latter. Due to the nature of the energy, only those individuals that had acquired the same genetic traits would be able to mate with one another unless they were to disperse the energy willingly. This was seen as a weakness to the energy. Particularly when you consider that the children of any such successful pairings would then need to miraculously find one another to carry any hope of continuing the bloodline. For them, dispersing their mutations was no longer an option.”

James nodded his head as he thought about that. “Does the mutation from this energy cause any adverse effects? Aside from the inability to breed with incompatible partners?”

“From our observations, there appears to be mild discomfort while the body adjusts to its new state. However, the energy itself releases a form of local anesthetic to prevent the host from experiencing the severe pain that would otherwise no doubt result from the accelerated mutation.”

When James heard that, he let out a relieved sigh. If there was a downside such as extreme pain, or an immune deficiency, he would have to immediately give up on this energy. However, with the energy instead being prepared around the concept of a ‘full mutation’, he was relieved.

Unlike other people who would simply understand this as a miraculous coincidence of energy combination, James could clearly identify that this was a creation of another Keeper. Whoever made this had specifically wanted an energy that would offer endless mutation and evolution possibilities. Otherwise, the odds of the energy being so ‘convenient’ for its user was practically nonexistent.

“I’d like any information you could provide on the exact process to create this energy, as well as the component energies.” Aside from Natural Energy, James was only able to identify one of the remaining three energy types used as an ingredient in this mutation-type energy.

“Of course!” Speaker Thorn spoke up in an excited tone, before her voice became more curious. “However, I can sense that you are not an organic life form. Will this energy not be wasted on you?”

“Nonsense.” James chuckled. “It’s not in my official entry, because this world has yet to formally research the subject, but one of my fields of specialty is in genetic modification. This energy happens to be a good match with me, and will allow me to pursue my passion project without concern.”

“Oh! I understand.” Thorn gave a firm nod, before turning to leave the lab. She had truly not been aware that James was learned in genetics, as she knew that this alliance of world governments had yet to delve into this field of science. However, once she knew that he was, his interest in the energy made all the more sense to her.

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I let out a groan as I saw Speaker Thorn leaving the research lab, bringing a hand up to massage my forehead. It seemed like it wouldn’t be long now before James started pushing for his nine-tailed dream. Though, he would first have to find the creatures to harvest the necessary information from, as well as having a willing subject to ‘store’ the mutations in.

For that last one... I had the strangest suspicion that Chel would be more than happy to help him reach his dream.