

Preparation

Surrounded by nebulae and stars, Ryun focused his attention on the anvil. The air was thick and heavy, courtesy of Erdania's Gravity manipulation that increased the pressure on the item in Ryun's hands. Selia carefully shaped a construct out of her crystallized Qi over the item, filling in the delicate and barely visible lines of formations etched on the surface of the item. The Qi layer was incredibly thin and fine, as it had to be for the next part of the process.

It surprised Ryun, back when he had really dwelled into the depths of creation, to realize just how much more was involved in the process of creating something than just molding metal. He had to learn many different disciplines. To create a sword, he had to know how to craft a handle out of wood or other material, to create armor he had to know how to stitch. And he had learned them all, from sewing to wood carving. Though, while he did know how to carve wood, he rarely did, in most cases he cheated. He used his fine control of Oblivion to just erase everything that was not what he needed. He was faster than most carvers, though he wasn't nearly as good even with Oblivion. He lacked something that he had come to refer to as the artists touch. The only times he ever felt like he was truly creating something was when he was making a spiritual tool. Which this project was not. It was a collaborative work, as most of his works were. He rarely needed to do all of the work. He had a Sect to draw resources from, so why bother sewing a half plate into a gambeson when he could just forge the metal pieces and pass them on to a Sect crafter to finish?

His current project was one of his most ambitious ones to date. First, he had taken a piece out of a *gollas* tree, a sturdy and highly conductive strain created by Ender himself. He carved the shape out of the wood plank with Oblivion, then passed it on to the highest tier wood processors

in his Sect. They worked the piece over, perfecting his craft until they returned it to him.

It was a small thing, about as long as his forearm and the handle half as thick as his wrist. The head of the scepter was three orbs, each held by a single *branch* that twined around it. It was a beautiful and simple work, even in its unfinished state.

Once he had it back, he used Oblivion to hollow out three small holes inside of the scepter's head. At that point he put it through his workbench, carving in formations all over its surface, something that had taken nearly six days of constant work.

Now as Selia layered down her Qi into the delicate formation carvings, Ryun let his aura out and triggered a few perks. **Titanic Swift Mind** to give him time and control, and **Oblivion's Mirror** to accomplish his task.

He motioned to Erdania and she produced the first item. It was a fist size orb, looking like a translucent gemstone. It was a Cultivator's Core, one of five that Ryun had secured from Eratemus. Cultivator Cores came in different shapes and sizes, had different effects. Only a few people were capable of drawing a Core out of a dead body, as Eratemus had explained to Ryun, as the core existed in a realm between realms, like the Soul. Though not always, some bodies and core perks did create physical manifestations of them, but Eratemus knew how to pull them out of that realm and give them a physical weight. Ryun didn't understand the process, but then again he didn't need to.

The Core Erdania held was once the Core of an Immortal Realm Cultivator on the Path of Blood Rain, wielding a fire-related Qi. It was a lucky thing that Eratemus had it, as it was suitable for Ryun's needs. A Core could hold any type of Qi, though how effectively it would hold it relied on how well the Core and Qi meshed together.

Erdania put the core near the first of the round orbs held by a twined branch. This was the hardest part of the process, and he had practiced it

ever since he returned to the Sect. He only now felt like he was proficient enough to achieve it without damaging his work.

Ryun focused on Oblivion around him, sharpening his will and mind, using his intent with precision. He leaned Oblivion on the Essence of Space and slowly pushed the orb. The space around the scepter flickered, but Eradina's Qi kept it pressurized while Selia protected it with the layer of her own Qi. Ryun kept his attention on what he wanted to do, making sure that he did not let Oblivion damage the scepter. And then, the orb slipped through space, sliding through the hole he opened up in it to slot itself into the hollow inside one of the scepter's heads.

Ryun knew that he was successful with his sense, he felt no damage and knew that the core had slid perfectly into the hollow inside. He could feel the formations carved on the surface of the wooden sphere trigger as they detected the core inside. He smiled then motioned to Erdania to bring out the second Core. This one looked the same, though it wasn't as translucent. All the core's he had gotten had been processed by Eratemus, they were very much improved. This was the core of an Immortal Realm Cultivator on the Path of Falling Mountains, using **Depth Stone Qi**.

Like with the first Core, the three of them worked together to slide the orb inside. Ryun pushed while slowly eroding space, forcing the orb to skip through it and into the hollow inside the scepter. Once that was done, and he was sure that he hadn't caused any damage, they continued to the last core.

This one was also from an Immortal Realm Cultivator, one on the Path of Howling Wind, utilizing Wind Qi. They slid the last core inside, and Ryun double checked that everything was fine. Once he was sure, he pulled prepared for the next part of the work.

First, he pulled out a small gemstone set into a metal socket. It was the remains of his **Focus of Indomitable Might**. He had taken it apart, modified it slightly and now he slid it into the socket in the wood that had been carefully crafted for it. The arrays on the focus connected with the formations and tested it out quickly. All seemed to be in working order, allowing them to move on the last part of the work.

He pulled out two pieces shaped like a hollowed out copy of the scepter in front of him split in half across its length, only this one was black, made out of chitin harvested from the monsters of the Dome of the Blighted Horde. On the inside, on the hollowed out part there were formations, carefully engraved by his workstation.

Working the material had been difficult, and it had been something that only he had been capable of doing. Chitin was not like metal, you couldn't heat it up and mold it how you wished, you couldn't forge it. He had used his **|Essence Manipulation|** to slowly bend it into shape, using the pressure from Erdania's Qi, and some specialized tools that Eratemus made for him.

Now, they slowly put the two halves over the wooden scepter, covering the formations in a protective shell. He placed Bright Star on the chitin, using the hammer as a focus for his skill and manipulated the Essence of the chitin, carefully melding it back into one piece. It was a time-consuming task, but none of them needed much rest.

Once he was done, he stepped back and looked over the finished item. It was an all black scepter, three orbs on top, each holding a core within. He smiled at Selia and Erdania and spoke.

"Nice work," he said.

"You too," Erdania returned his smile.

Selia narrowed her eyes and Ryun felt her dismiss her Qi from within the scepter, there was no need to keep the formations sheathed any more.

"Are you going to check it?" Selia asked.

Ryun nodded and reached for the scepter, picking it up. Immediately he got the naming window, and he put in the name that the three of them had decided on.

Three-Qi Scepter of Weaving	+3500 to Wisdom +2000 to Dexterity +1200 to Intelligence This scepter holds three cores capable of storing Qi. Only the person holding the scepter can sense the cores and Qi inside. It is shielded from all scrying powers.
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	<p>Holding the scepter increases the control of Essence and Qi shaping by 40%. The scepter is immune to all Oblivion and related effects. The scepter contains a focus that allows techniques to be used. Techniques channeled through the focus will have their effectiveness increased by 320% and their Qi cost reduced by 40%. Abilities channeled through will have their effectiveness increased by 320% and their cooldowns reduced by 40%. Every third instance of focused technique or ability will have an increased effect. Techniques will be 620% more effective and have their cost reduced by 80%, and abilities will have their effectiveness increased by 620% and cooldown reduced by 80%. The focus can also fire a blast of concentrated energy drawing power from one of the three cores which will deal damage equal to 50% of your wisdom.</p>
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Ryun smiled, a lot of the issues with gear he had in fights was because of the destructive nature of his Qi. This scepter was immune to it. Or at least the surface was, but then again his Qi couldn't penetrate it to damage the inside, so it was the same thing. It also helped him patch one of his weaknesses. His Qi could do a lot, but Oblivion tended to be very disruptive. Now, he could widen his repertoire a bit. It was a great item, and it was also a good practice for when he started working on a spiritual tool for Zach and himself.

He offered the scepter to Erdania and she picked it up, knowing what he wanted. Immediately, he felt her Qi moving into the scepter, the formations in it transferring the Qi directly into one of the cores. It couldn't hold as much of her **Worldstone Qi** as her own core, of course, but it was enough. She then passed it on to Selia who did the same thing, filling in one of the cores with her **Sanguine Flame Qi**.

"Here," she passed it over to him.

As soon as he touched it, he felt the two cores and Qi inside of them. The Qi was freely given, and when put in another core it was no longer under the control of the Cultivator that had given it, at least that was how Eratemus explained it to him. Still, it was not his, so it was like unbound Essence, he would have to control it in a similar manner, but he had gotten proficient enough with it. Besides, the scepter was also a focus.

“One core left,” Ryun said. He had to find Tali for that one, but also he had to speak with her. They left the forge, and he took to the sky, heading north, looking for Tali. He didn’t have much time left.