

A practical decision tree

Which genre labels apply?

Run all three tests. The labels overlap because they answer different questions.

01 · MECHANICS

Does the story use explicit RPG mechanics?

Levels, stats, classes, skills, quests, or a game interface

YES → LitRPG

02 · FOCUS

Is deliberate growth central to the story?

Training, advancement, milestones, and earned capability drive the plot

YES → Progression fantasy

03 · TRADITION

Does advancement follow cultivation practice?

Self-refinement, breakthroughs, realms, sects, or transcendence

YES → Cultivation fantasy

RESULT

Combine every “yes.” One book can carry one, two, or all three labels.