

Lightning 1161

[Lightning Is the Only Way](#)

Chapter 1161: Lesson

The new Sect Master of the Eternal Fire Sect looked at Orpheus with a serious expression.

"Who are you?" she asked with a careful but domineering voice.

"I'm the Minstrel, the current Ancestor of the Myriad Sect," Orpheus said with a calm and warm smile.

The people of the Eternal Fire Sect narrowed their eyes.

The Minstrel.

They had all heard of him in the past. He hadn't been covert on his journey through the ranks. He had won one tournament after the other, pocketing all the prizes.

These tournaments had been held by Sects on the level of the Eternal Fire Sect to find powerful and talented disciples in the Star God Realm. Valuable prizes would be offered, but since the winner would just join the Sects directly, the treasures would remain in the Sects.

That was how it was normally, but Orpheus had always taken the prizes without accepting the invitation of any Sect, which was quite shocking. Why wouldn't a powerful Star God want to join a powerful Sect? They would gain access to so many different resources, and they wouldn't even really need to work until they became Ancestral Gods.

Yet, Orpheus had always rejected them.

It was almost like Orpheus didn't want to interact with anyone else.

Due to this strange behavior, a rumor that everyone had dismissed had suddenly gained more credibility.

Rumor had it that the Minstrel was the Opposer's son.

That was why the Minstrel wasn't allowed to get close to anyone. Heaven saw the Minstrel as an enemy, and it bestowed bad luck to him. Rumor had it that everyone who came close to the Minstrel would be killed in a tragic accident.

And then, the Minstrel had suddenly vanished.

Everyone had believed that the Minstrel had died.

But now, the Minstrel stood in front of the three people of the Eternal Fire Sect, and he had finally joined a Sect.

And he had killed an Ancestral God in the Eternal Fire Sect's territory just now.

If Orpheus were just another Ancestral God, they would have directly killed him.

However, Orpheus was a level five Ancestral God that could fight level seven Ancestral Gods.

That was a jump of three levels due to the two-level jump between the sixth and seventh levels.

This put Orpheus on the same level as the most powerful Ancestral Gods of the Peak Sects.

Orpheus was essentially a Chosen of a Peak Sect without the backing of a Peak Sect.

"Are you aware of what you have done?" the Sect Master asked with narrowed eyes.

"Yes, I killed an Ancestor of a different Sect," Orpheus answered with a charismatic smile.

"Why?" the Sect Master asked.

"Because I wanted to," Orpheus said nonchalantly.

Silence.

The people of the Eternal Fire Sect had thought that Orpheus would say more, but he didn't. Apparently, that was his entire reason.

"That's it?" the Sect Master asked.

"That's it," Orpheus answered.

"Are you aware that it's against the rules of the competition?" she asked.

"Yes," Orpheus answered.

Silence.

The Sect Master became frustrated and angry deep inside, but she kept it hidden.

Why was she so frustrated?

Because she was trying to bury the issue, but Orpheus wasn't complying.

If Orpheus had simply said that he didn't kill the Ancestor, the Sect Master would have found a way to simply stop the investigation and let it vanish into nothingness.

If Orpheus had said that he didn't know about that rule, the Sect Master would have given him only a formal punishment without any actual weight behind it.

Why was she trying to rescue Orpheus?

Two reasons.

First of all, Orpheus was part of the Myriad Sect, and the Myriad Sect would soon join the Eternal Fire Sect. That meant that Orpheus would also join the Eternal Fire Sect.

Second, Orpheus was just too powerful. Even if the Sect Master and Vice-Sect Masters fought together, Orpheus still had a good chance of winning.

Were they supposed to call their Ancestor?

Not only would that embarrass the new Sect Master, but the Ancestor was also far too powerful for a mere level five Ancestral God. Orpheus had zero chance of victory.

This meant that the Ancestor would lose Karmic Luck if he killed Orpheus.

And Orpheus had a ridiculous amount of Karmic Luck, thanks to being Gravis' brother.

Manuel was watching with gritted teeth. He knew that the Eternal Fire Sect was far too powerful for them and that the Eternal Fire Sect could even kill Orpheus.

Manuel had no idea how he could rescue the Sect under that threat.

Sadly, after being a Sect Master for such a long time while being inside an organized competition with rules, Manuel had overlooked something very fundamental.

"Why were you willing to offend the Eternal Fire Sect, a Sect that can kill you, just because you wanted to kill someone?" the Sect Master asked.

Orpheus only smiled.

"Because I'm powerful enough to do so."

"You won't kill me."

Silence.

Ten seconds of silence passed as Orpheus' words entered the ears of every present being.

It was so simple and direct.

Manuel's eyes widened in realization.

Then, a bitter smile appeared on Manuel's face. 'How have I forgotten that truth?' he asked himself.

Manuel looked at Orpheus, and his resentment slowly vanished.

'I forgot that all of this is only a competition. The Eternal Fire Sect has intimidated me to the point that I didn't even dare to evaluate their true power.'

'Orpheus always has my back. I could have simply ordered the death of the Ancestor without any repercussions.'

'No wonder Gravis asked me several times if that's what I wanted. He knows that there wouldn't have been any repercussions. And yet, I explained to him what responsibilities a Sect Master has.'

'There is much more to learn,' Manuel thought with a smile.

Manuel looked over to Gravis, who only winked at him.

"Thanks, you two," Manuel transmitted to Gravis and Orpheus.

Orpheus didn't answer, but his smile widened.

After the Sect Master had heard Orpheus' words, her eyes narrowed.

This was bad!

Orpheus had unveiled the hidden truth and made it public. If she didn't handle this situation correctly, the Eternal Fire Sect would become the laughingstock amongst all the other Sects.

"What? Your entire Sect got humiliated by a level five Ancestral God, and you didn't kill them?"

This was what the people would say.

In a sense, Orpheus was forcing them into a conflict. The Sect Master had tried to give Orpheus a way out of the situation, but Orpheus wasn't reciprocating. Orpheus was essentially telling them to attack him.

It was almost like he wanted to die.

After some seconds, the Sect Master made her decision.

She called her Ancestor.

The Sect Master quickly explained everything to the Ancestor via a communication ring, and the Ancestor quickly answered.

"You want me to waste my Karmic Luck just so that your image in other people's eyes doesn't get damaged?" he asked coldly.

After hearing her Ancestor's words, the Sect Master felt incredibly embarrassed.

"He's right. He has the power to break these unimportant rules. We held this competition to find powerful and smart future Elders. He successfully recognized his own power and our power, and he came to a correct conclusion. The Minstrel sounds like a brilliant future Sect Master," the Ancestor said.

"Instead, just because of your fragile ego, you want me to sacrifice my Karmic Luck. Maybe it was a mistake to choose you as the Sect Master."

"Allow the Myriad Sect to join the Eternal Fire Sect."

"As soon as the Minstrel becomes a level seven Ancestral God, he will become the new Sect Master of the Eternal Fire Sect."

"You know how we choose our leaders. It's against the rules to kill fellow Sect Members, but as long as you don't get caught, it's fine. It's not wrong to break the rules, but you can't get caught doing so."

"Kill him before he becomes the Sect Master with strength or prove to me that your planning and scheming is superior by uniting the Sect against him."

"You won the earlier clash and became the Sect Master, but you obviously aren't ready yet for that position."

"Either overcome this new opponent or get pushed into mediocrity."

"I don't care if you win or lose. I only want the best of you two to win," the Ancestor said. After that, he told her how he wanted their clash to be held and cut off the connection.

The Sect Master's face had long since gotten white in terror.

'I just made a grave mistake!' the Sect Master thought in deep regret.

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Chapter 1162: End of the Myriad Sect

The Sect Master was filled with regret. Not only had she put her position into jeopardy, but she had also committed a grave mistake.

She had forgotten the fundamental truth of the world.

Power was everything.

As a person that managed to win against thousands of other Ancestral Gods in the political battle, she wasn't a stupid or ignorant person.

She wasn't like Nira, the former Sect Master of the Nine Elements Sect.

She recognized when she made a mistake, and she had fully realized that she had handled this situation incorrectly.

The correct way would have been to acknowledge Orpheus' power and tell him that the competition was over and that the Myriad Sect could join the Eternal Fire Sect.

'I can't forget that fundamental truth again!' she thought to herself with determination. 'I've been so embroiled in these political battles that I forgot how it is to be a Cultivator in the wild.'

'Today, I learned another important lesson, and I won't ever forget it.'

Then, she looked at Orpheus and slightly narrowed her eyes.

'Sadly, you have now become my opponent, and I have to suppress or kill you. You helped me in understanding this lesson, but for my future path, I can't let you overtake me. I'm sorry, Minstrel.'

The Sect Master straightened her posture and looked at Orpheus with the pride of a Sect Master.

"You're correct," she said. "You are powerful enough to break such an unimportant rule. However, I would advise you from breaking any more rules in the future since you and the Myriad Sect will be part of the Eternal Fire Sect from today onwards."

Shock washed through the disciples of the Myriad Sect, which was quickly replaced by relief and exhilaration.

They could finally join the Eternal Fire Sect!

Who wouldn't want to join the Eternal Fire Sect?

The disciples from the Sect of the dead Ancestor quickly joined the Myriad Sect. Sure, they were sad and angry that their Ancestor died, but they didn't really know her. Her death wouldn't stop them from joining the Eternal Fire Sect.

"We are happy to join the Eternal Fire Sect," Manuel said politely as he stepped forward. "However, the most powerful members of the Myriad Sect are old friends, and we don't want to split up. Would that be possible?"

The Sect Master frowned.

The Ancestors were the ones that created and led the Sects, which meant that the actual Sect Masters of these Sects were only figureheads. Didn't Manuel know his position?

"His words are my words," Orpheus added. "I never led the Myriad Sect. I was only there to act as deterrence and backing. The Sect Master has made all the decisions, and the current prosperity of the Myriad Sect is all thanks to him. I only watched."

This surprised the Sect Master of the Eternal Fire Sect.

A Star God managed to outsmart and outthink eight other Sects which were led by Ancestral Gods?

Ancestral Gods had over a million years of experience over Star Gods, but this Star God managed to outsmart so many of them?

The Sect Master's evaluation of Manuel shot through the roof.

The Sect Master wasn't arrogant, and she knew how outstanding she had been in the past.

Yet, Manuel was even more outstanding than she had been back then.

If everything the Minstrel had said proved to be correct, Manuel had a very high chance of becoming the Sect Master in the future.

'However, he's still only a Star God. It will take time for him to become an Ancestral God. Right now, he's not a danger, and I refuse to suppress future competition. The smartest and most powerful Cultivator deserves to become the Sect Master, and if I try suppressing any future dangers, it will prove that I'm not the most powerful Cultivator.'

'In order to prove that I'm the most powerful, I have to let him grow until he becomes a true danger to my position,' the Sect Master thought.

"I can grant you that wish," the Sect Master said. "Are 100 spots enough?"

"More than enough," Manuel said with a polite bow. "Cultivator Skywind thanks his Sect Master."

Skywind was Manuel's title.

The Sect Master nodded. "Gather up everything. In a week, an Elder will arrive to bring you to the Eternal Fire Sect. In one week, the Myriad Sect will cease to exist, and all its members will join the Eternal Fire Sect."

The Myriad Sect said some polite words, and the people of the Eternal Fire Sect eventually left.

Then, the Myriad Sect threw a party.

Joining the Eternal Fire Sect had been everyone's goal from the very beginning.

Why?

Because, due to the power difference in the Sects thanks to the Opposer, pushing a new Sect to the peak was basically impossible.

Sure, the Myriad Sect was probably one of the most powerful Sects comprised of Star Gods in the highest world, but that was it.

It already proved challenging to find tempering for the Myriad Sect, which would stunt their growth.

Then, when the Myriad Sect reached the Ancestral God Realm, even the absolute weakest Sect in the Ancestral God Realm could eradicate them easily.

One had to remember that, by that point, over a million years would have passed ever since the Opposer had fought Heaven. In that timeframe, the weakest Sects filled with Ancestral Gods would have already been consumed by the more powerful ones.

Usually, new Sects would reach the Ancestral God level one after the other, which meant that there would always be many new Sects at that level.

However, in these million years, no new Sects would have joined while the older, weak ones were eradicated.

Even the weakest Sect on that level already had hundreds of Ancestral Gods.

On top of that, the Ancestral Gods had had over a million years to become more powerful.

Ancestral Gods below the fourth level would have nearly died out in those million years.

Because of all these reasons, Manuel had always planned to join the Eternal Fire Sect.

Manuel had gathered a lot of information on the Eternal Fire Sect, and he also knew their philosophy. In essence, nepotism didn't exist. Loyalty was also not as important. The length of having been a member of the Eternal Fire Sect also didn't matter.

Only intelligence and power mattered.

This meant that Manuel didn't need to stage a coup or a sneaky rebellion.

Just by becoming more powerful and amassing more political power, Manuel could become the new Sect Master aboveboard.

That was perfect for the Myriad Sect.

Even more, it was normal that factions were created in the Eternal Fire Sect. After all, the Eternal Fire Sect got a lot of its members through these competitions, and the Sects that won the competition would often stay together.

That was to be expected.

On the surface, the Eternal Fire Sect looked united, but deep inside, it was split into many factions that all vied for power.

That faction war inside their Sect was the very reason why the Eternal Fire Sect became so powerful.

Only the strongest and smartest survived. The stupid and weak ones would die.

The competition was fierce and deadly, and exactly this kind of constant danger produced the most powerful Cultivators.

The members of the Myriad Sect would be distributed among the other factions, which tested their loyalty. If they were disloyal to the past Myriad Sect, the opponent would gain more forces. If they were loyal, Manuel would gain many people on the inside of the other faction, giving him a lot of valuable intelligence.

The real war started now.

However, Gravis wouldn't be part of that war. He wouldn't join the Eternal Fire Sect since he didn't want to be suppressed by responsibilities. Gravis could gain all the resources he wanted himself, which meant that he didn't need any powerful Sect backing him.

Gravis partied with the Myriad Sect for the remaining time, and when the Elder of the Eternal Fire Sect arrived, Gravis asked for a visitor's token. With that token, he could visit his friends whenever he wanted.

The Elder didn't mind and gave one to Gravis and Mortis each.

The former Myriad Sect threw one last look at their old headquarters. Funnily enough, all the trees would go with them, leaving the old headquarters barren.

After a while, they all left, leaving Gravis and Mortis behind.

Gravis and Mortis looked at the empty headquarters of the Myriad Sect with a nostalgic expression.

Then, the two of them left to continue comprehending Laws.

In the future, these buildings would house another Sect.

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Chapter 1163: Matter Laws Done

While everyone was settling down in the Eternal Fire Sect, Gravis and Mortis continued their Law Comprehension.

Mortis made himself intangible and snuck some comprehension from Sects far more powerful than him while Gravis returned to Opposer City to look at the Soft Pure Material Law.

And so, another long time of comprehension took place.

Mortis needed 80,000 years to comprehend the Law of Hurricane's Cutting. His speed of comprehending level seven Laws became faster thanks to his increased Law Comprehension experience.

Gravis needed 90,000 years in total to comprehend the True Law of Soft Pure Materials.

'Finally, all the level seven Material Laws are done,' Gravis thought with a sigh. 'The Material Laws have already integrated into the Major Law of the Dead World, just like all the level six Elemental Laws.'

'Theoretically, I could create a world even more powerful than a higher world with enough Energy. Although, I can't fill it with life.'

'Anyway, I should buy some Law Comprehension Fruits for the more troublesome Battle Laws,' Gravis thought.

Mortis had stayed with Azure ever since he had finished comprehending the Law of Hurricane's Cutting.

Gravis also wanted to visit the Eternal Fire Sect, but he also wanted to buy the Law Comprehension Life Fruits first.

Narcissus knew a lot of powerful Laws, but Gravis wasn't sure if he knew these specific level seven Elemental Battle Laws. Additionally, Gravis didn't always want to rely on the wealth of his friends.

Also, Gravis had enough money now to buy these fruits.

Gravis went to the Smart Cultivator in Opposer City, and as soon as he entered, he was greeted by an Ancestral God.

'Jake told me that the manager would come out himself as soon as a Star God enters the shop,' Gravis remembered.

"Welcome to the Smart Cultivator. How can I help you?" the Ancestral God asked with a polite smile.

"Hello, I would like to buy four Law Comprehension Life Fruits for the True Law of Stone's Cutting," Gravis said.

The smile of the manager widened. "Of course, but they are very expensive. A Virtualization Array for a level seven Law costs 100,000 God Stones per century, and a Cultivator needs 100,000 years to comprehend a level seven Law on average. This means that they would need to buy the lease 1,000 times, which would come to 100 million God Stones."

"Four Law Comprehension Life Fruits are more than enough for the average Cultivator to comprehend the True Law of Stone's Cutting. In essence, three of them are worth just as much as a full comprehension via Virtualization Array. So, I would make a loss by offering you four for the price of three."

Then, the smile of the manager widened. "But I'm going to do just that. Four for the price of three, which comes to exactly 100 million God Stones. Are you interested?"

100 million God Stones.

That was enough for a level one Star God to become a level six Star God. This should show how much 100 million God Stones were.

Gravis handed over the 100 million God Stones without a word.

Why would Gravis hesitate? He had 12 billion God Stones right now. The Vice-Sect Master of the Lost Wind Sect had paid with ten God Crystals, which came to 20 billion God Stones due to their increased worth. The Economistress took four billion, and another four billion were used for the material packages, leaving Gravis with 12 billion God Stones.

If a level one Star God consumed 12 billion God Stones, what Realm would they reach?

If a level one Star God consumed 12 billion God Stones, they would become a level four Ancestral God.

However, 100 million God Stones was still a lot, right?

Well, humans often had issues with imagining big numbers.

In fact, 100 million God Stones wasn't even 1% of 12 billion God Stones.

If someone earned 2,000 gold per month, the current expenditure of the Law Comprehension Life Fruits, when put into perspective, would be less than 20 gold.

It was essentially nothing.

When the manager saw Gravis hand over so many God Stones without any noteworthy reactions, his smile widened. He knew that he had a big customer on hand.

"Due to the small demand for these Law Comprehension Life Fruits, you'll have to wait for about five hours while we procure the fruits. I'm sorry for any eventual troubles," the manager said.

"It's fine," Gravis said. "I'll just wait here."

"Of course," the manager said.

Gravis went to the side and simply waited for a couple of hours, which was basically nothing to someone over 700,000 years old.

A couple of hours later, Gravis got his Law Comprehension Life Fruits, and he went back to his father's place.

Gravis swallowed the fruits and concentrated on comprehending them, and after just 200 years, Gravis comprehended the True Law of Stone Cutting.

'Six out of fourteen done. Nearly halfway there,' Gravis thought. 'Anyway, I wonder how everyone's doing inside the Eternal Fire Sect. I should go visit them.'

Gravis left Opposer City and traveled to the Eternal Fire Sect.

It didn't take Gravis very long to reach the Eternal Fire Sect, and when he arrived, he saw the Eternal Fire Sect for the first time.

It actually didn't look very special.

In fact, the Eternal Fire Sect was set up very differently from the Sects Gravis was used to seeing.

Usually, a Sect had one huge headquarter where everyone would live and do their duties.

Yet, the Eternal Fire Sect was different.

Due to all the different factions, the Eternal Fire Sect didn't have a headquarter or a single place where everyone could meet. Sure, there was the castle with the leaders of the Sect, but that castle basically stood alone on top of a mountain range. There were no other buildings near it.

Instead, all the different factions in the Sect had created their own small regions and territories.

This meant that, funnily enough, the Eternal Fire Sect was basically just a huge geographical territory with plenty of smaller powers trying to vie for supremacy.

There was one undisputed leading power, which was the leadership of the Eternal Fire Sect. However, the leadership rarely involved themselves in the struggles of the different factions. They only set up the rules and enforced them if someone broke them.

Of course, when the Eternal Fire Sect got into trouble, they would force the factions to help. The factions might be warring with each other in secret, but if an external power threatened them, they would be a united front.

Obviously, with all of this faction warfare, it was possible to gain a certain amount of political power if one led a powerful faction. Could one of those faction leaders demand more rewards or better jobs from the leadership of the Eternal Fire Sect?

No.

The factions were allowed to go against each other, but they were not allowed to go against the Eternal Fire Sect. As soon as one faction tried to go against the Eternal Fire Sect, there would be no more reason for that faction to exist.

The leadership would just directly kill the leaders of that faction.

Even if 80% of the Sect started a rebellion, the Sect Master would just kill the strongest 10%. The rebellion would quickly disperse after that.

Gravis thought that the style of management the Eternal Fire Sect employed was quite effective.

'Reminds me a bit of the middle world.'

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Chapter 1164: Manuel's Faction

Gravis arrived at Manuel's faction pretty quickly. The Eternal Fire Sect's territory was gigantic, but it also had many Teleportation Formation Arrays inside it, making it easy for Gravis to get there.

When Gravis arrived, he was surprised by how small Manuel's faction looked. There were barely any buildings, and it looked more like a solitary castle than an entire faction.

However, the twelve core members of Manuel's faction were all present.

Manuel was the Leader.

Aris and Broad Walker were the Vice-Leaders.

Meadow and Narcissus simply sat beneath the headquarters.

Dorian, Ferris, Azure, Stella, Exar, Yersi, and Jake were simply the elite force. Apparently, Elders were no longer necessary due to the new way everything was set up.

Everyone welcomed Gravis, including Mortis. After all, Mortis was also here because of Azure.

"Why are only you guys here?" Gravis asked. "I expected you to create a formidable faction with a lot of members."

"Things are different now," Manuel said with a tranquil smile. "We aren't really warring with other Sects but fighting over resources."

"Resource war?" Gravis asked. "Is it like the Sect Alliance in the higher world I have been to?"

The last question was mainly targeted at Stella, who had even been part of the Sect Alliance back then.

"Not entirely," Stella said with a smile, happy that Gravis was here. "We have about 3,000 Star Gods in our faction, which doesn't sound like much, but 3,000 Star Gods is already the average for the factions inside the Eternal Fire Sect."

"That's not as much as I had thought," Gravis answered with surprise. "Why are there not as many members?"

"Because of the fucking meatgrinder," Dorian said with an annoyed tone.

"Meatgrinder?" Gravis asked.

Dorian snorted. "Yeah. Star Gods have to be able to jump one level outside the Eternal Fire Sect to become true members. Any Star God that joins via a faction or absorbed Sect has to enter the meatgrinder."

"The meatgrinder is basically just an amalgamation of team fights with comprehension breaks between the fights. Three people form a team, and they have to kill their three opponents to advance."

Dorian snorted again. "Even more, the ones the Eternal Fire Sect deems as more powerful will be paired with weaker partners to make the fights fair. Apparently, that fairness exists for late-bloomers. According to them, if one Star God knows a level seven Law and only two level six Laws, they are weak. However, if they can suddenly comprehend a second level seven Law, they will be powerful. That's why the fights have to be equal."

"Guess who they sent into the meatgrinder. Come on, take a guess," Dorian nearly shouted with annoyance.

Gravis only smiled bitterly. "Was it you?" he asked.

"Hell yeah it was!" Dorian shouted with anger. "Oh, you don't feel like someone that can jump a level. We have to be fair to everyone. We don't care if you say you can fight a level above yourself," Dorian mimicked with a sarcastic voice.

Gravis scratched the back of his head with an amused smile. "I mean, I can understand them. Your power is very... non-traditional."

Dorian snorted again. "You shoulda seen my two teammates. I always had to fight two powerful Star Gods at the same time while they had to deal with one, and most of the time, I also had to deal with the third one. It was honestly ridiculous."

"Then, I complained to the Eternal Fire Sect and told them that I was obviously powerful enough. But what did they say? Come on, guess!" Dorian said with a sneer.

"Luck?" Gravis asked.

"Right! They said that I only won due to luck. My opponent was taken by surprise by my fighting style, which stopped them from showing their real power. Even more, my Laws weren't powerful enough for them, apparently. According to them, it was impossible for someone with my Laws to fight someone a full level above themselves."

Then, Dorian smirked. "And then, I put on two additional, dominating performances without even needing to comprehend another Law. I killed eight out of our collective nine opponents, and they didn't even push me into a true feeling of tempering."

Suddenly, Dorian started laughing. "You shoulda seen their faces when they allowed me to truly enter the Eternal Fire Sect. They saw that I killed so many of their Star Gods and the best part was that the fights didn't even increase my Will-Aura. I basically killed eight Star Gods for fuck-all!"

"Man, they looked at me like I just took off my pants to shit on the floor in front of them," Dorian said with loud laughter.

Gravis laughed along with Dorian. Dorian's way of narrating his experiences always managed to elicit laughter from the crowd.

"Sounds just like you, Dorian," Gravis said. "Was anyone else sent to the meatgrinder?"

"Me and Jake," Yersi said from the side while hugging Jake. "Luckily, we ended up in the same team, and we managed to become strong enough to join our dear leader."

Manuel coughed awkwardly into his hand.

Jake just nodded while looking at Yersi lovingly.

"Glad you could make it," Gravis said as he also embraced his daughter.

It would be an understatement to say that Gravis was happy to see his daughter with all his other friends. On top of that, Yersi also had someone that loved her eternally.

"Everyone else managed to enter directly?" Gravis asked.

"Kind of," Meadow added from below the ground.

"Oh?" Gravis asked.

"The Eternal Fire Sect wanted to send Narcissus and me somewhere else. Apparently, we are too valuable to remain here, and they were willing to give us access to many more resources," Meadow said with pride but also disdain.

"I told them to stop talking, or the power of the shit they spew from their mouths might involuntarily push me to the Divine God Realm. That was some top-grade fertilizer they were producing, and I also gave them the friendly advice to bottle their words and sell it to farmers for some insane profits," Meadow said.

"They didn't take my words very well, but I didn't care. As assholes, it was in their nature to spew shit out of their mouths, and as a flower, I react appropriately to the shit and grow a giant middle finger for

them to enjoy. I advised them to stop spouting so much shit, or I might grow so big that some of their friends might actually stumble on one of my many hungry root-mouths."

Gravis and Dorian laughed loudly at Meadow's words while the remainder only awkwardly smiled.

Meadow's way of talking wasn't for everyone.

"What about you, Narcissus?" Gravis asked.

"I told them that slow and steady growth is important for our kind. We can't grow too quickly, or things might become bad in the future," Narcissus answered.

Gravis only smirked. "Is that true?"

"No," Narcissus answered.

Everyone laughed again.

Gravis entered the castle, and everyone followed.

For the next couple of years, Gravis stayed with everyone and simply had a good time. Some reports would come from the resource locations, but Manuel would always handle them pretty quickly.

One of them had to leave from time to time, but they also returned pretty quickly.

In the 1,000 years Gravis spent here, he had never seen even an inkling of the ferocious war that was supposed to be going on.

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Chapter 1165: More Laws

After a thousand years, Gravis and Mortis left Manuel's faction again to comprehend their next Laws.

Gravis had already finished the Material Laws, which meant that he would now help Mortis with the Battle Laws for his new Form Law.

Mortis vanished and went to some random Law Comprehension Area of some random Sect, while Gravis went back to Opposer City.

"You're back. How can I help you?" the manager of the Smart Cultivator asked.

"One Virtualization Array for the True Law of Zero's Cutting," Gravis said.

"Of course," the manager answered with a wide smile. "For how long do you need it?"

"Until I comprehend it. Should take me about 80,000 years or so," Gravis answered.

The manager was surprised that Gravis would only need about 80,000 years to comprehend a level seven Law, but he guessed that Gravis was probably a Cultivator with an Ice Affinity.

"Let's go with 100,000 years. If you comprehend it earlier, you can simply bring it back, and I'll give you back the money for the remaining time," the manager said.

"Sure," Gravis answered.

After paying 100 million God Stones, Gravis left the Smart Cultivator again under the shining eyes of the manager. The level seven Virtualization Arrays were at the highest tier of the wares they sold. There was nothing more expensive than them.

Level eight Virtualization Arrays basically didn't exist.

Why?

Because only Ancestral Gods and very powerful Star Gods would be interested in them, and those Cultivators were always members of some Sect. They either led their own Sect, or they were members of Sects with Divine Gods. Those Sects had access to plenty of Law Comprehension Areas for level eight Laws.

Even more, the Smart Cultivator wasn't some gigantic organization with lots of managers all over the world. Now, the manager Gravis always met was literally the owner of the Smart Cultivator.

The manager was one of the very few really powerful Ancestral Gods without any Sect backing them. The manager opened his shop to get enough money to comprehend a level nine Law without joining a Sect.

The Smart Cultivator was profitable, but the manager would need to earn about 1,000 God Crystals to buy some comprehension for a level nine Law. That number of God Crystals was enough to push a level one Star God to the level one Divine God Realm.

After getting his Virtualization Array, Gravis returned home. The Opposer's castle didn't have a slot that allowed Virtualization Arrays to work, but he simply created one. The Opposer had had enough time in the past to comprehend Formation Arrays.

Gravis sat in the room and activated the Virtualization Array.

CRK! CRK! CRK!

Powerful and terrifyingly cold ice appeared all over the room, and Gravis felt the cold winds cutting his clothes and body. Sometimes, the icicles in the room broke off and entered a storm, which then began to cut the entire room with them.

Gravis had long since gotten used to such displays, and he immediately closed his eyes to enter a comprehension state.

While Gravis was comprehending the True Law of Zero's Cutting, Mortis was focusing on the True Law of Hurricane's Explosiveness.

And thus, another long time of comprehension began.

Mortis was the first to finish after 77,000 years. The True Law of Hurricane's Explosiveness was done.

Gravis finished just 4,000 years later. The True Law of Zero's Cutting was done.

'Huh, a thousand years more than I had anticipated. Glad I accepted the manager's offer, or I would have needed to visit the shop again,' Gravis thought.

'That's eight out of fourteen Battle Laws done. Six more to go,' Gravis thought.

Gravis scratched his chin as he fell into thought.

'I think I can do one more. It doesn't feel like much time has passed, and I don't really want a break right now. Mortis wants to take one, but I don't mind. He can take one if he wants,' Gravis thought.

Gravis went over to the Smart Cultivator and got another Virtualization Array.

This one was for the True Law of Zero's Explosiveness.

Gravis activated it and quickly went to work.

75,000 years later, he comprehended the True Law of Zero's Explosiveness.

Mortis was about to finish with the True Law of Ancestral Wood's Cutting, but it would take about 10,000 years more.

Gravis brought the Virtualization Array back and hurried to the Eternal Fire Sect. He wanted to take a break again.

In just a couple of hours, Gravis arrived at Manuel's faction again, and his eyes widened when he saw it.

Huge!

A gigantic castle pierced through the sky with millions of valuable houses around it. It was like the city of an emperor!

Gravis' eyes widened as he saw all the Cultivators on the streets.

'So strong!' Gravis thought in shock.

Level six and level seven Star Gods just randomly walked around the streets. Most of the Cultivators in the city were in the level four Star God Realm, but there also was a sizable number of level five, six, and seven Star Gods.

Gravis also noticed the power of his friends, and his eyes widened.

Stella, Azure, Manuel, and Aris were level seven Star Gods, while the remainder of his group of friends were level eight Star Gods.

Even more, they all had Will-Auras at the peak of the Star God Realm.

This meant that their Will-Auras were all as powerful as Gravis' Will-Aura!

Gravis also saw that all of them were dealing with different tasks. Manuel was planning an assault with Exar and Azure. For a second, Gravis was confused. Didn't Manuel normally decide everything himself?

However, Gravis quickly came to a conclusion.

Manuel alone wasn't enough anymore to deal with the enemy's plans.

Azure had led a couple of powers in her past, and she had a bright mind. Exar was a genius when it came to strategizing. It made sense that Manuel would ask them for advice.

"Hey, Gravis. We'll greet you later. This is important," Manuel said quickly as he threw Gravis a half-hearted smile.

"Oh, don't mind me. You do what you have to do," Gravis answered.

Manuel only threw Gravis a small smile before his face became solemn again.

"Oh, hey! It's Gravis!" an excited shout came.

Ferris arrived in front of Gravis and danced around him. "Man, Gravis, I missed you sooooo much! Why have you been gone for so long?" Ferris asked.

Gravis only smiled and chuckled at Ferris' antics. "I wasn't gone for so long, Ferris."

"Are you kidding? You were gone for super duper long!" Ferris answered with an excited smile. "You've been gone for like over 150,000 years or something. That's a super long time!"

Gravis was a bit taken aback.

Over 150,000 years?

That didn't feel that long. Gravis had only comprehended two Laws in that timeframe. Additionally, Gravis didn't even feel any different since the last time he came here.

It was like no time had passed for him.

Gravis and Ferris talked for a long time, and Gravis was surprised that no one else showed up to greet him.

It was like only Ferris was happy for him to be here.

Not even Stella had given him more than a friendly hello.

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Chapter 1166: Perceived Time Dilation

Ferris told Gravis everything that had happened in the time since his last visit, and the longer Ferris talked, the more shocked Gravis grew.

The events themselves didn't really shock Gravis, but the sheer amount of what had happened shocked him deeply.

None of the things were that special. There were just some fights here and there and some restructurings.

However, there were just so many incidents. The sheer number of them was simply shocking to Gravis.

Ferris had talked to Gravis for nearly a week before he was done recounting the events, which left Gravis surprised.

'All of that happened while I was away?' Gravis thought. 'It doesn't feel that long to me. It feels more like I've only taken two naps, and that's it. It only feels like I've been away for only a couple of years. I don't even particularly miss everyone since I feel like I had just met everyone yesterday.'

'Is this the effect of using Samsara too often?' Gravis thought. 'Over 150,000 years passed, but 150,000 years doesn't actually feel that long. I went through much longer periods of time.'

'However, if I break it down with my actual, physical age, It would make more sense that so many things had happened. I'm about 950,000 years old, and 150,000 years is just a bit less than an entire sixth of my life.'

'For a mortal, it would probably feel like they would have been away from their family for ten years.'

'For mortals, a lot of things can happen in ten years.'

While Ferris was continuing to talk excitedly, Gravis looked around Manuel's faction with eyes reflecting complex emotions.

Now that Gravis actually focused on his surroundings, he noticed that the entire feeling of everyone was... off. It was like a lot of things had changed.

However, the surroundings weren't the issue. The issue was more with how Gravis' friends felt to him.

A good example would be Dorian. Gravis still remembered how he had talked to him the last time. Dorian hadn't appeared any different from normal, but right now, Dorian appeared far more serious.

Gravis could see how Dorian talked to many members of Manuel's faction with a serious tone. He was currently giving them a lot of advice for the off-chance that they would be outclassed by their enemy. He was telling them how to retreat and how to use the changing environment to take their enemies by surprise.

Surprisingly, Dorian didn't joke around while teaching these things to the members of Manuel's faction. Instead, he was teaching the members everything very methodically. It was like he had been doing that for an eternity.

Dorian had always had a peculiar personality. He had always been crass and didn't take many things seriously, but right now, it felt like he had grown up, for lack of a better word.

Gravis could feel the weight of responsibility Dorian carried on his shoulders.

Seeing Dorian like this reminded Gravis of Lazar, Dorian's grandson. Lazar had always appeared exhausted due to his job as a Sect Master. Lazar always only very rarely joked around since he had to uphold a certain aura.

Dorian was very similar to the Lazar from back then. It was like Dorian placed the importance of the effectiveness of his teachings above being himself. He would rather completely change himself to give others a better chance at understanding his lessons.

Stella didn't seem much different from usual, except for the absence of her jumping into Gravis' arms. She was reviewing a lot of Formation Arrays and was also changing the Formation Arrays on several pieces of equipment.

Ferris had told Gravis that Stella had become pretty good at handling Formation Arrays.

'150,000 years, huh?' Gravis thought with a worried expression. 'I think that should be enough to learn a lot about Formation Arrays.'

Stella had gone from a complete novice in Formation Arrays to being good enough to alter Formation Arrays that cost millions of God Stones.

'I've only been gone for a bit of Law Comprehension.'

Gravis also looked at Meadow, who quickly noticed that Gravis was looking at her.

"Oh, would you look at that. The great lord of Sitting-On-Your-Arse has returned to visit us," Meadow commented.

Gravis only chuckled a bit. "How have you been, Meadow?" Gravis asked with some concern.

"Ew, what's with that tone?" Meadow asked with disgust. "You're worried over me? I already have a boyfriend, you know. That's not cool!"

"You know how I meant that, Meadow," Gravis said.

"And you know how I meant that, dickwad. How about you don't bore me for only one second?" Meadow asked.

Gravis only smirked. "Lord Sitting-On-Your-Arse, eh? You're just jealous because you don't have an arse. Additionally, even if you had one, you wouldn't even sit on it. Normal people sit on the floor, but you're underground. In your case, the floor sits on you. That also explains why you have no arse. It's pointless on you."

"There ya go," Meadow answered, clapping in a very sarcastic manner with her roots. "Little baby boy finally got some teeth. Why didn't you show them earlier? You went all sappy and worried for me. You creped me out for a second."

Gravis scratched the back of his head with an awkward smile. "Well, I fear I might have done something wrong."

"Huh? Again? What's it this time?" Meadow asked.

"Well, I think I shouldn't have skipped my last break," Gravis said. "I don't feel like a lot of time has passed, but not everyone might feel like that."

"That? Pffft!" Meadow snorted. "How long was it? 100,000, 200,000 years? Makes no difference to me. Has your sensitive little human brain received a small little ouchie?"

"I mean, you are even older than me," Gravis said. "It probably won't feel any different to you, but the others might not feel the same."

"For example: Take a look at Dorian or Stella. If you compare them to how they were 200,000 years ago, don't they feel different?" Gravis asked.

Meadow paused and looked at Dorian and Stella. "Sure, but that's normal. Humans and beasts change all the time. It's like I take a short nap, and everyone I know is already either dead or very different. That's just normal."

"Although," Meadow said slowly as her perception focused on Gravis again. "You don't feel different. It's like you haven't changed since the last time, which is surprising. You humans change all the time, but you didn't."

This worried Gravis. "So, everyone else feels different, but I don't feel any different?"

"That's what I said, you deaf fuck," Meadow answered.

Gravis remained silent for a while.

Everyone had changed, but he hadn't changed?

'It's like I was put in some sort of time capsule or something. It feels like no time has passed for me, but so long has passed for everyone else.'

Then, Gravis looked at Ferris, who was still excitedly narrating his exploits.

Gravis smiled a bit. 'Well, not everyone. Meadow, Narcissus, and Ferris haven't changed a bit. I think Meadow and Narcissus don't really undergo many changes since they are the oldest beings in our group. On top of that, they are plants, and time passes much slower for them, and Ferris is simply too simple and perfect. He has no reason to change. Ferris is just Ferris.'

"Where's Aris?" Gravis asked Ferris.

Ferris stopped talking to find the relevant information about Aris in his head. "It's Aris' turn to comprehend another level seven Law right now. He should be comprehending a Law somewhere in a Law Comprehension Area."

Gravis nodded.

Gravis had noticed Aris' absence while looking at Manuel's faction since nearly everyone else was present.

Manuel, Azure, and Exar were planning something right now.

Meadow and Narcissus were sitting below the faction, as always.

Ferris was talking Gravis' ear off.

Dorian was teaching some members.

Stella was going over Formation Arrays.

The others were absent.

"What about Yersi and Jake?" Gravis asked.

"They're at the frontlines with our other soldiers," Ferris answered. "Yersi and Jake aren't powerful enough yet to be placed here, and they need more tempering. They've been at the frontlines for about 100,000 years."

Gravis nodded. "What about Broad Walker?"

A confused expression appeared on Ferris' face for about five seconds.

Gravis looked at Ferris with a raised eyebrow.

"Oh, right, Broad Walker!" Ferris suddenly said, proud that he remembered who that was. "I haven't thought about him in a long time."

"He died like 60,000 years ago."

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Chapter 1167: So Much Time

"Broad Walker is dead?" Gravis asked in surprise.

"Yeah, a lot of our members died. We're lucky that he's the only one to die in like 500,000 years," Ferris said.

"500,000 years?" Gravis repeated with a shocked expression.

"Yeah, it has been something like 500,000 since you had to deal with the entire Sin Aura thing. It's been a really, really long time!" Ferris said.

Ferris' words hit Gravis hard.

500,000 years.

It had been 500,000 years since Liam, Skye, and the others had died.

That was so long!

Gravis looked at his hands absentmindedly. 'But it feels like it happened only recently. Yet, it's been 500,000 years?' he thought in shock.

Gravis did some calculations, and he realized that he had already been a Star God for over 600,000 years.

'I have been a Star God for so long already? I haven't even truly fought another Star God during that time. My friends go through one tempering experience after the other while I simply don't. It's surreal.'

Of course, Gravis knew why he hadn't gone through as many temperings as the others.

First of all, Gravis had received a lot of tempering from Samsara and then even more from the Sin Aura. In essence, Gravis had skipped two to three temperings with those.

However, that wasn't everything.

Gravis knew exactly what the main reason was.

He had to comprehend so many Laws.

Gravis wasn't willing to fall a level in Battle-Strength, but everyone's Battle-Strength took a huge leap starting at the Star God Realm. In the higher world, comprehending a level seven Law as an Immortal Emperor would be the stuff of legends. No one was even certain if that had ever happened before.

Yet, to become a Star God, it was necessary to achieve exactly that in the highest world.

On top of that, Gravis always had either the advantage in terms of Energy and Spirit or in terms of physical power due to his special beast body. However, that also changed with the Heavenly Treasure everyone received.

If Gravis hadn't known the Law of Sentience, it would be impossible to jump six levels.

The Law of Sentience alone would have made him nearly unkillable in the Immortal Emperor Realm, even if he were only an Early Minor Circulation Immortal Emperor.

However, now, the Law of Sentience only allowed Gravis an entry token to fighting someone six levels above himself.

The Law that had boosted Gravis to unimaginable heights in the Immortal Emperor Realm now only gave him a slight chance at keeping his current Battle-Strength in relation to others.

Then, there was also the Major Law of Death. Without that, fighting six levels above himself would also be impossible for Gravis.

At this very moment, Gravis had comprehended a whopping 21 level seven Laws, not counting the level eight Law of Suffering and the level nine Law of Heavenly Lightning.

21 level seven Laws!

This was absolute insanity for someone in the Star God Realm!

The most powerful Star Gods might have comprehended five level seven Laws, but that was it. Five level seven Laws would be more than enough to comprehend a really powerful level eight Law.

'It's my Battle-Strength,' Gravis thought. 'I refuse to compromise on my Battle-Strength, but I have to pay a price. That price is the lack of personality progression and the unreal wastage of time.'

Gravis looked at the people in Manuel's faction.

'Everyone went through so many experiences. I spent the last 500,000 years sitting in a room and comprehending Laws, while everyone else was dealing with enemies, administrating the faction, building up forces, teaching forces, and seeing their forces get decimated.'

'Right now, they probably don't even feel like they are the Myriad Sect anymore. After all, they have spent far more time in the Eternal Fire Sect than in the Myriad Sect. The Myriad Sect had probably become a distant, fond memory of theirs. It's like it isn't real anymore or like someone else has lived their life in the past.'

Gravis looked at all his friends again with his Spirit Sense, and he felt like a slight thorn had buried itself into his heart.

'And they've all gotten used to living without me.'

Gravis' Spirit Sense focused on Stella, and a grimace appeared on his face.

'Stella loves me just as much as I love her, and she hasn't seen me for over 150,000 years. On top of that, the time we were together was only a thousand years long.'

'I don't even see her for 1% of my life.'

'It's like I only visit for one day every four months. That's fine for extended family and children since they have their own life, but it's different for a romantic partner.'

Gravis looked at Stella with pain.

Stella was already on the seventh level of the Star God Realm, making it hard for Gravis to see all of her Law fragments, but he still managed to glean some things.

Her love for Gravis was basically frozen.

It was still there, but it wasn't something she had been thinking about many times.

'How often has she thought of me in the last 150,000 years?'

Silence.

'She probably thought about me a lot in the first few years, but I probably slowly vanished from her mind.'

Gravis felt a deep pain in his heart.

He felt guilty for not being there.

He felt hurt that Stella had basically forgotten him.

However, most of all, Gravis felt guilty for not having missed Stella for the past 150,000 years.

Gravis had been completely focused on his Laws, and the time had also passed very quickly.

To Gravis, it literally felt like he had just taken two short naps.

'Stella probably wanted to see me so badly, but I haven't even really thought about her.'

'This is just like that time in the middle world.'

Back then, when Gravis had been alone, he had thought about his home. Gravis still remembered that he had forgotten the faces and voices of his parents and friends. Everything had been so distant from his life in the middle world, making it feel like his friends and family actually didn't exist.

Stella was going through something similar.

Her love for Gravis was like a plant that hadn't been watered in a very long time.

It basically looked dead, and it didn't react to anything.

However, Gravis knew that he only had to water the plant carefully for the foreseeable future.

'I've been neglecting everyone for too long,' Gravis thought. 'I have to remember that becoming powerful is not my main priority. Freedom and happiness are my main priorities!'

'I've been focusing too much on my power, which is only a secondary goal.'

'I have to make this right!'

However, before Gravis went to Stella, he contacted Mortis.

Mortis should have gone through something similar, and Mortis probably had some advice on this issue.

"Your case is worse than mine, but I've gone through something similar," Mortis said. "Just be yourself and spend time with her. It will be like you two are getting to know each other again, but your personalities will quickly get attuned to each other again."

"Thanks, Mortis," Gravis answered.

Then, Gravis went to Stella after telling Ferris that he wanted to have some private time with Stella.

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Chapter 1168: Formation Arrays and Equipment

Gravis arrived in front of Stella while she was tinkering with some Formation Arrays on different pieces of armor and weapons.

"Oh, hi, Gravis," Stella said with a smile. "What brings you here?" she asked.

Gravis immediately noticed several worrying things.

First of all, Stella's greeting had been awkward. It was like she didn't know how she should talk with Gravis.

She was talking like she was supposed to know him but didn't.

Second, Gravis could feel nervousness coming from Stella. It was like she had no idea how she should act towards him.

It pained Gravis to feel these things.

To him, it didn't feel any different from all the other times they met, but to Stella, it felt like they hadn't met in an eternity.

However, Gravis didn't address the awkward atmosphere.

Instead, he focused on the equipment from the other side of the large table. There was quite some distance between Gravis and Stella. Gravis wanted to close that distance, but he also knew that Stella would feel more nervous.

"Are you trying to upgrade the Formation Arrays to allow more Star Gods to combine their power?" Gravis asked as he looked at the equipment.

Stella was surprised. "Can you make Formation Arrays now?" she asked in shock.

Gravis only laughed. "No, but I can guess the function of the Formation Arrays based on what Laws they use."

"Oh, okay," Stella said before she went back to looking at the equipment.

Silence.

The awkward atmosphere was oppressive.

Gravis scratched his chin as he looked at the pieces of armor and weapons.

"Wait here for a bit. I'll be back in a couple of hours," Gravis said with a smile before teleporting away with a wink.

Stella was surprised that Gravis left so quickly again, but she released a sigh of relief.

She had feared that Gravis would want to get close to her as soon as they met.

However, she wasn't certain how she should act if Gravis wanted to get closer.

They were husband and wife, and something like that should come naturally. That was also how it had been in the past. No matter how long they had been apart from each other, Stella's feelings would guide her on what to do.

Sadly, her feelings hadn't guided her this time, making the situation very awkward for her.

She continued tinkering with the Formation Arrays without much success, and eventually, Gravis returned.

When Gravis returned, Stella became nervous again, but she continued focusing on her work.

However, her work was cut short as Gravis pulled all the equipment on the table towards him. In just a short moment, the thousands of pieces of equipment floated in front of Gravis as he looked at them.

BANG!

A gigantic pile of ore hit the ground beside Gravis.

Then, Gravis took out his saber and unleashed a Lightning Crescent on the pile of ore.

BOOOOOOM!

The Lightning Crescent exploded with incredible power, but Gravis kept its destructive power isolated.

The light of the destructive explosion shocked Stella.

It was so powerful!

However, the ore didn't get reduced to nothingness but only melted.

This ore was a hard pure material for level nine Star Gods. If Gravis only used Heavenly Lightning, he couldn't possibly muster enough power to melt it.

BANG!

Gravis unleashed another Lightning Crescent, melting the ore even further.

Parts of the ore turned to dust, but that was to be expected. Gravis couldn't have full control over his power when he unleashed all of it at once.

BZZZ!

Gravis unleashed Heavenly Lightning to keep the ore melting while absorbing God Stones to keep his Energy output going.

Gravis glanced at one of the weapons and back at the molten ball of ore.

A small piece of the ore left the ball and arrived in front of Gravis. After that, Gravis focused on the piece of ore and shaped it into a weapon.

In just a second, an identical copy of the weapon had been created. However, it wasn't just a simple copy. The Formation Array that had been added to the previous weapon had been integrated into the weapon.

Adding a Formation Array onto a weapon was like drawing a symbol on a wall while integrating it was like one was carving the symbol into the wall.

The Formation Array couldn't be changed without reforging the weapon, but it also had a far stronger presence and integration.

Gravis repeated the same thing thousands of times until he had made a perfect copy of all the equipment.

Even more, most of the equipment had been created with the level six Law of Matter, while Gravis used the level seven True Law of Hard Pure Materials.

On top of that, all the equipment was now on the same level, which was the ninth level of the Star God Realm.

The Cultivators using these pieces of equipment wouldn't need to get new equipment before becoming Ancestral Gods.

Lastly, Gravis had added something shocking.

He had created all of the weapons to be World Weapons!

Of course, the weapons only had the potential to become World Weapons. Cultivators still needed to put in the relevant blood and a Higher World Core.

The blood wasn't an issue for Star Gods. In the Immortal Realms, one needed the blood of a beast that was perfectly compatible with oneself, but that changed. Humans in the Star God Realm now also had bodies that were as powerful as beast bodies, which included the Laws flowing through their blood.

So, every Cultivator could just take their own blood.

In essence, Gravis had created thousands of World Weapons that only missed the Higher World Cores.

If Gravis wanted, he could now earn a ridiculous amount of money again if he started forging again, but he had enough money right now. On top of that, Gravis had a better way to make money.

Torturers were many times rarer than forgers.

After Gravis was done, he put the new pieces of equipment on the table while throwing the old pieces to the side.

"Here!" Gravis said with a bright smile. "Try it!"

Stella looked with conflicting emotions at the new pieces of equipment.

Then, Stella activated the Formation Arrays.

WHOOOOM!

All the Formation Arrays activated at the same time, and the different sets of armor vibrated crazily. It was like the power flowing through them was severely damaging them.

However, that was only how it appeared.

Gravis had specifically used ore powerful enough to resist that stress. The armor sets were vibrating, but they wouldn't get damaged, even if all of them were activated at once.

Stella's eyes widened as she saw that the sets of armor didn't break.

Her goal had been to improve the Formation Arrays to the point that 500 of them could work together, which would have already been shocking.

One had to remember that combining the power of thousands of Peak Immortal Emperors was still many orders of magnitude away from combining the power of only a hundred level nine Star Gods.

Yet, Gravis had created over 5,000 sets of armor that could combine their power perfectly in less than a day.

"See?" Gravis asked with a bright smile. "The Formation Arrays have been added, which was the problem. Sure, you can add Formation Arrays on top of the equipment, but the Formation Arrays are not integrated into the armor. The Laws that bind the Formation Array to the equipment will crumble, essentially making the Formation Array lose the connection to the armor."

"That's the thing with Formation Arrays," Gravis continued. "You can add them, but if you want really good equipment, you need to integrate the Formation Arrays into the equipment. You can work all you want with the Formation Arrays, but if you want to have a good result, you need to get a forger that can actually integrate the Formation Arrays into the weapons and sets of armor."

"However, I have to say that the Formation Arrays are really good," Gravis added with a smile. "I haven't seen them before in Opposer City, which probably means that they are an original creation. I'm pretty sure you created them, Stella, and they're really good."

"You just have to get a forger that can add them to the weapons and pieces of armor," Gravis finished.

Gravis looked at Stella for a while, but Stella only looked at the new equipment in front of her.

Gravis' expression became nervous as he saw Stella's reaction.

Stella wasn't positively surprised or happy or exhilarated.

No, Stella looked like she had just been hit by reality.

It was like a dream of hers had been crushed.

When Gravis saw her like this, he became nervous.

"I know," Stella said slowly.

Gravis' nervousness rose.

"I know that integrating them is better," Stella said quietly with uncertainty and a bit of helplessness. "However, I just don't have the time."

Stella put her head in her hands as she looked down.

"Forging one weapon with Formation Arrays integrated while using the Major Law of Matter takes me over five years," Stella said quietly. "To make enough equipment to combine the power of an entire unit of level seven Star Gods takes me nearly 40,000 years. On top of that, I have to take into account that Star Gods continually learn new Laws."

"Their auras change, which means that I have to reforge them again and again, and when I'm finally done, they are already all level eight Star Gods, which means that the equipment becomes useless again. Then, what was the point of forging all of this?" Stella explained quietly.

"I don't have the level seven Matter Laws."

"I don't have the money to buy so much hard pure ore just to experiment."

"I don't have the time to comprehend the Law."

"I can't even make World Weapons due to how hard it is to create all these fine lines."

Stella looked at the old equipment, which had been unceremoniously thrown to the side by Gravis.

"That was the accumulation of about 36,000 years of my work," Stella said with a distant voice.

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Chapter 1169: Stella's Worries

Silence.

Gravis looked at the equipment he had carelessly thrown to the side with regret.

Gravis had assumed that Stella was creating the Formation Arrays, not the entire equipment.

Stella had put so much work into everything, but Gravis had thrown everything to the side.

"I'm sorry, Stella," Gravis said slowly. "I didn't know that you have forged all of this equipment."

"Does that change a thing?" Stella asked calmly.

"What do you mean?"

"It's not about you caring for my feelings or anything. It's about the truth, and the truth is that all my efforts have amounted to nothing."

"As always," Stella added with a regretful expression.

"Hey, your equipment is still very good! After all, I didn't lie when I said that I hadn't seen these Formation Arrays before. If you created them, that's wonderful!" Gravis said with a reassuring tone.

Stella sighed.

"That's not it, Gravis," she said as she looked at him with complex eyes.

"I know why you did what you did. You saw something that bothered me, and you took care of it. You care for me, and that's why you went out to spend a ridiculous number of God Stones just to get this huge chunk of ore. You thought that this entire thing was troubling me, but you thought incorrectly," Stella said with a sigh.

Gravis wasn't sure what he should think right now. "What do you mean?" he asked again.

"Gravis, put yourself in my shoes for a bit," Stella said. "I love you, and I want only the best for you, and I know you feel the same way towards me."

"You give me equipment. You give me safety. You give me Laws. You give me everything."

"Yet, what do I give you?" Stella asked.

Gravis raised an eyebrow.

"I can't help with your equipment," Stella said.

"I can't help with your Laws."

"I can't help with your tempering."

"I can't help you when you're in danger since you're much stronger than me."

"I want to help you with something, but there's absolutely nothing I can do," Stella said with a shaking voice.

"When you condensed your Sin Aura, I tried everything in my power to help you. I gave it my all! I taught so many disciples. I gathered so much money. I tempered myself so many times just for you," Stella said in a louder voice.

"Yet, what did that do?" Stella asked quietly again. "What was my help worth?"

"You told me that Orpheus dealt with 30% of your debt and that the Myriad Sect also dealt with something like 20%. You dealt with the remaining 50%."

"So, what was my help worth? Has my help even made a difference? You know that, even if I didn't help, you would have had no issues in surviving."

"Something was threatening my husband's life, and it's my duty and desire to help him. Yet, I'm just a small pebble on the mountain that helped you get through your Sin Aura."

Gravis remained silent.

"Even more," Stella continued. "All the power I have also comes from you. I'm only this powerful because I have an outstanding husband with the Law of Empathy."

"I know that the others don't think that way, but I feel like I'm only in the Star God Realm because of you. Nearly all of my Laws come from you. I see how hard everyone else is working, and I'm so impressed with their dedication and their growth in power."

"Meanwhile, I only have to wait for you."

"I could sit on the ground for a million years and not do anything, and you would eventually still give me several level eight Laws by then."

"I don't even have to temper myself since I don't need to fight to comprehend Laws. A Will-Aura isn't necessary when I learn all the relevant Laws regardless."

Stella looked to the side with absent eyes. At this point, she wasn't even sure if she was talking to Gravis or to herself.

"You also wouldn't need to worry about me anymore. I would safely reach the Divine God Realm eventually by doing nothing. I could spend time with you whenever you need me, which is literally the only thing I can do for you."

"I would only stay home and do nothing while waiting for you."

"That's the extent of everything I can contribute to this relationship."

"However, is such a thing still a relationship?"

"No, a relationship is between two relatively equal partners. One partner can be better at some things, but there are always things that the other partner can contribute."

"However, since I can't contribute anything, all of this wouldn't count as a relationship."

"I'm not a partner or wife."

"I'm a pet."

"You take care of me, and the only thing I'm good for is to be happy when you return."

"That's all I can do."

Silence.

Gravis looked with deep pain at Stella. He knew that these weren't some irrational thoughts created by impulsive emotions. No, the things Stella was telling Gravis had been on her mind for a long time, based on how she talked about them.

'So, this is what Stella truly thinks.'

Gravis got reminded of Liam.

Back then, Liam had tried to chase after Stella since he felt like he had to protect her. However, Stella's growth was so incredibly fast that she went further and further away from Liam.

It was impossible for Liam to catch up to Stella, no matter how hard he tried.

Stella was in the same predicament.

Stella tried to help Gravis with something, but Gravis was superior in literally everything that had to do with Cultivation.

Gravis was more powerful, comprehended Laws faster, and made better equipment.

Stella was essentially watching how Gravis tried to deal with dangers that threatened his life, but Stella could only watch.

She wanted to help, but she didn't have the ability to.

One could compare this to a relationship between mortals.

If both partners had a job, there wouldn't be an issue.

If one partner had a very lucrative job and the other had a far worse job, there might appear some friction between the two. In a sense, the perceived inferior partner would feel more useless, and they would want to prove that they weren't beneath their partner.

Because of that, the partner might try to reach the same heights as the other partner, but if they didn't reach a comparable height, resentment might be born.

One solution to this issue was to let one partner take care of the money while the other took care of everything else.

They cleaned the household, took care of the kids, did grocery shopping, and helped the partner relax when they came home.

In that sense, the other partner became a gigantic help again.

However, what if the first partner had so much money that they hired maids, butlers, cooks, nannies, guards, chauffeurs, and so on?

What would the other partner do then?

Nothing.

Even if they wanted to help, they couldn't.

There was simply nothing they could do because one partner had taken care of all the problems.

Stella was in exactly this situation.

She couldn't help Gravis with anything.

In her mind, she was contributing just as much as a house pet to the relationship.

As a proud Star God with immense power, such a reality was nearly unbearable to her.

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Chapter 1170: Gravis' Side

The two of them remained silent for a couple of seconds.

"If you were more powerful than me, what would that change?" Gravis asked.

"I would have been able to help you with your Sin Aura," Stella answered immediately.

"And I wouldn't have comprehended the True Law of Suffering. By not being of much help, you helped me more than you could have helped by actually helping me," Gravis answered.

Stella frowned.

"Let me finish," Gravis interjected before Stella could say something. "I know that my words sounded very crass, but there is a point to all of this."

Stella suppressed her desire to interrupt Gravis.

"Now, if we ignore this entire Sin Aura thing. If you were more powerful than me, what could you do for me?" Gravis asked.

"I could protect you when-"Stella started, but she didn't finish her words as she realized something.

Gravis nodded. "Exactly," Gravis said when he saw that Stella realized the meaning behind his words.

"Anything that endangers my life is tempering, and if I want to become more powerful, I can't have any help with that. As soon as I realize that my life actually isn't in danger since you will intervene, my Will-Aura won't be able to grow anymore."

"Now, let's assume you could give me a ton of Laws I don't know, and all these Laws would increase my Battle-Strength by an entire level. Would that make me safer?"

Stella grimaced.

"No, it wouldn't," Gravis added. "Because, when my Battle-Strength grows, I also have to fight even stronger opponents for tempering. In a sense, you giving me more Laws might actually endanger me more than if you didn't. My power increases, and to help my Will-Aura grow, I would need to put myself under even more danger."

"Then, when I am actually in danger of losing my life, you would have to retreat far away so that you can't possibly help me. Otherwise, I wouldn't be able to temper myself."

"So, if you were more powerful than me, and if you could give me many more powerful Laws, you wouldn't be able to make my life safer."

"The same thing is true if you could give me incredible equipment. Due to the powerful equipment, my Battle-Strength increases, which means that I have to fight more powerful enemies."

"Now, what about if an enemy appears that I can't possibly win against? Sure, you could save my life and kill them yourself, but at that point, wouldn't you also be many times more powerful than me again?"

"Wouldn't the entire dynamic reappear but with switched sides?"

Stella's mind was trying to come to terms with what she heard.

She hadn't seen these things from that viewpoint.

"Alright, so, what can I do for you with my power?" Gravis asked.

Stella thought about protecting her, but that wasn't even true.

Orpheus and the Ancestral Gods were there, and they were even more powerful than Gravis. Gravis' interference wouldn't make a difference.

Equipment?

Gravis had already debunked that.

So, what was Gravis actually doing for Stella?

"You are still giving me so many Laws," Stella said. "Just based on my own merits, I don't deserve to be as powerful as I am now."

Surprisingly, Gravis chuckled, and Stella frowned.

"It's not about your Battle-Strength," Gravis said. "Let me put it this way. If I had given all these Laws to someone else, would they even be alive anymore?"

"What do you mean?" Stella asked.

"Ability to transcend temperings," Gravis explained. "Most of our friends died in temperings. Sure, some of them were also killed by far more powerful Cultivators, but a lot of them also simply died since they lost against their opponents. They could have theoretically won, but they didn't."

"If they had more Laws, they would have fought more powerful enemies. Would they have survived against these enemies?"

"I don't think so," Gravis added with a slight shake of his head. "Battle-Strength is nice, but you also have to have the ability to triumph against your opponent when they are as powerful as you. When two opponents with the same power fight each other, Battle-Strength becomes irrelevant. After all, they are already equally as powerful. Battle-Strength dictates what opponent you fight for your tempering, not if you win."

"In that situation, the most important thing is your ability to grow under pressure. If your ability to grow under pressure is below your opponent's, you will die. After all, if you both have the same starting point, victory depends on the person that can grow more."

"Only you have control over that ability of yours. The more you want to live, the higher your concentration becomes under these circumstances."

"So what if I gave you some Laws?" Gravis added with a smirk. "You're fighting two or three levels above yourself. Sure, it wouldn't be anything special if others could also get these Laws, but the impressive thing is that you managed to survive more than once."

"If all your Laws came from me, you wouldn't be able to comprehend new Laws during tempering, and you would inevitably die when you meet an opponent that comprehends a new Law during your fight."

"That has obviously happened to you before, but you still managed to triumph."

"Even if I gave you no Laws at all, you would still be able to fight, at least, one level above yourself, maybe even two. That's still very impressive."

"Don't forget, you managed to become the Holy Maiden of a Peak Sect of the most powerful higher world in existence. You achieved that all on your own."

"Don't think that you're unworthy of your Realm."

Stella looked at the table with furrowed brows.

"Now!" Gravis added with a loud shout. "Let's talk about what you are actually contributing to this relationship."

Stella looked at Gravis.

"Let's imagine that you stayed at home just to wait for me to return."

"If you did that, Manuel, Dorian, Azure, Aris, Ferris, and Exar would have died in their wild war against the other Sects. Without you, one more powerful Star God would have been added to the pile of enemies, who would have killed everyone," Gravis explained.

"You have saved the lives of nearly all of my friends and my son, just like they have saved yours in the war. I can deal with some deaths, but if everyone died in their effort to help me, I wouldn't be sure if I could forgive myself."

Stella looked absentmindedly at Manuel's faction.

"Next," Gravis said. "If I didn't know how much my death would hurt you, I would already be dead."

Stella's gaze shot to Gravis in shock.

Gravis sighed.

"The Sin Aura was unimaginably terrifying," Gravis said. "I was continually fighting against the desire to kill myself. I just wanted this torture to end, no matter what."

"During that time, I didn't think about my father, or Heaven, or whatever."

"I knew that Aris, Yersi, and especially Cera would be able to handle my death. Sure, Aris and Yersi would grieve for me, but they would get over it."

"The three of them don't need me. It's nice to have me, but they are my children. They don't need me as much as I need them. The death of a parent is horrible, but the children can come to terms with it. Yet, if one's child dies, the parent will likely never recover."

"While I was under the effects of my Sin Aura, I had a lot of horrible thoughts," Gravis said as he looked with a pained expression to the side. "I didn't care for my father's problems. They were his problems, not my problems. That wouldn't stop me from killing myself."

"Mortis? Sure, I would feel a lot of guilt for killing myself, but Mortis hadn't had someone back then. I could accept taking his life away too, as long as this torture would end."

"My friends? They would be able to get over my death, just how I got over their death. It sounds cold, but that's how life works."

"Nothing was stopping me from just ending the torture."

Gravis looked at Stella.

"Except you."

Stella took a deep breath.

"I knew that you would be under unimaginable pain. A part of me even believed that you might kill yourself too."

"The love between two lovers is different from every other kind of love. A parent needs their children, but the children don't need their parents as soon as they become adults."

"Friends want to be with each other, but they don't need the other side."

"However, lovers need each other. I need you, and you need me. If one of us two dies, the other one won't feel complete anymore. We would feel like a part of our self is missing."

"When I was in that dark place, you were the only thing that kept me going," Gravis said as he looked deeply into Stella's eyes.

"The thought of causing you so much pain stopped me from ending my suffering."

"Your existence saved my life, and no one else could have saved my life under these circumstances," Gravis said with a sigh.

A short moment of silence passed before Gravis continued.

"Now, next thing," Gravis said. "My two main priorities in life are happiness and freedom. Power comes after that."

"I can become powerful on my own."

"I can become free on my own."

"But I can't be happy on my own."

"Your existence is the only way I can ever reach happiness in this life," Gravis said. "Without you, freedom and power become meaningless."

"You talked so much about helping me in the aspect of power, but you failed to see that power isn't my priority."

"I want to be happy, not powerful."

"And when you're not happy, I'm not happy," Gravis added.

"So, please, don't try to destroy your happiness for something as unimportant as power," Gravis said as he came closer to Stella.

Then, Gravis lightly took her hand into his.

"Please," Gravis said.

Then, he looked at the ground.

"I only want you to be happy."

Gravis' sincere words touched Stella, and she felt her eyes water.

The frozen love had thawed.

Stella touched Gravis' face and pulled him closer.

And then, they shared a long kiss.

It was like they had never been apart from each other.