

Lightning 141

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Chapter 141: Proposition

The whole Heaven Sect waited for Gravis to return, but he never did. Aion couldn't delay the departure anymore and led the Heaven Sect away, fuming with anger. 'When I return, I'll tear you a new one, Gravis,' he thought. Didn't Gravis know how important this visit was? Was this how Gravis thanked him for all the work he had done?

Meanwhile, Gravis was sitting on top of Skye and flew to the east. Behind Gravis lay a gigantic banner about 20 meters long. 'They will travel for a total of six days and will stay for one. I doubt that Aion will return prematurely just because of me. So, they will be back exactly one week from now. I have one week to get as much tempering and wealth as possible, though I should probably stop after six days. Without a good head start, Aion might find me very quickly.'

Luckily, with Skye now being a high-grade Energy Beast, the way to Gravis' destination was very short. It only took them one day. Gravis and Skye had left on the second day and arrived at their destination simultaneously as the Heaven Sect took off to their headquarter.

Gravis looked at the horizon. There, he saw a gigantic volcano, higher than any volcano or mountain he had ever seen. Just its base was already breaking through the clouds, and a lot of lava was running down its sides. The volcano was always active and spewed lava 24/7. Around the base of the volcano, Gravis could see a lot of buildings made of obsidian. People darted from one building to the other.

Obviously, that was the Fire Guild. Gravis looked around but couldn't see any Energy Beasts or Energy Plants. It seemed like the strength of the Fire Guild was about the same as the Lightning Guild and couldn't compare with the Wind Guild.

Gravis furrowed his brows as he saw some peculiar things. In the Wind Guild, no one fought, while he had seen some spars in the Lightning Guild. Yet, that was child's play in comparison to the Fire Guild. Wherever he looked, he saw people fighting. They were even fighting along the communal toilets. Their battle intent was really crazy. Gravis' furrowed brows slowly changed into a smirk. 'I bet they'll love my proposition.'

Skye and Gravis flew closer and stopped near the edge of their borders. A lot of disciples and guards already looked at Skye and pointed with their fingers. It was rare seeing a high-grade Energy Beast around these parts. Many of the guards readied their weapons. Such a foe was dangerous!

"Fire Guild!" Gravis shouted with all his power from Skye's back. His voice reverberated throughout half of the Fire Guild, and everyone looked into his direction. "I am Gravis from the Heaven Sect, and I have an offer for all of you!"

The disciple's narrowed their eyes, and their battle intent skyrocketed. Someone not from their guild was flying above them and talking down to them. In their minds, this was blatant disrespect, even if Gravis didn't mean it like that. That was just how the disciples of the Fire Guild were. They searched for any reason to battle with others.

"We are not interested!" came a strong shout from the middle of the guild. Gravis felt that this shout came from someone in the Spirit Forming Realm. "We don't care what you offer! We only want to temper ourselves. Leave!" the voice shouted again.

Gravis' smirk increased. "That's exactly what I am here for!" he shouted back and, surprisingly, the voice didn't answer immediately. "Starting today for the next six days, I will accept life and death duels from anyone in the eighth and ninth level of Magic Gathering. This is my personal proposal and has nothing to do with the Heaven Sect. If I die, nothing will happen to you! Of course, I still have one condition."

The disciples talked with each other. It was hard for most of them to find real life and death tempering. Disciples in the higher stages could only find life and death tempering with high-grade Energy Beasts or with other people in their level. Yet, how easy was it to find a high-grade Energy Beast, and how easy was it to find people at their strength, willing to fight them? That was the biggest reason why they had so many people in the higher levels of Energy Gathering but nearly no Spirit Forming experts.

"What's your condition?" said the voice from the Spirit Forming expert, now with more friendliness. The Fire Guild was very interested in that offer. Free life and death tempering? Who could say no to that? Of course, this was only true for the Fire Guild. The other guilds would probably decline. They have spent so much to get so many strong disciples. Why would they send them to their deaths?

"Simple!" shouted Gravis. "I will place a banner down in front of your guild. Written on it are the names of multiple body strengthening pills. Someone who wants to fight with me to the death has to give me one of those before the fight," Gravis released a small laugh. "Of course, if the disciple wins and I die, they can rob me of everything I have. Why would a dead person care about their wealth?"

At first, some disciples thought this sounded like a scam, but in the end, they realized that it honestly didn't matter. If they killed Gravis, they would get their pill back, as well as all his wealth, and if they died, their wealth would be irrelevant. They slowly started realizing how confident Gravis was in winning. This made a lot of them furious. In their minds, Gravis was obviously underestimating them! How dare he!?

"Alright, we accept!" shouted the voice again. Gravis smirk intensified, and he took up the banner from behind him. He had created the banner while they were on their way to the Fire Guild. Gravis made Skye dive and threw the banner at the ground. The banner was made out of the wood of an Energy Plant, so it was pretty durable. As it hit the ground, the earth shook, and the banner vibrated for a while.

"I'll be waiting ten kilometers to the north of here!" Gravis shouted. Skye quickly brought Gravis to their target location and landed. The fighting arena that Gravis chose was outside on a meadow, near a river. There was a lot of open space, and they wouldn't destroy that much stuff while they fought.

The river was only around a hundred meters wide, and Skye flew to the other side. Skye wouldn't be participating in the subsequent fights. This whole tempering was all for Gravis. Meanwhile, Gravis' emotions were a mixture of anxiety and excitement. While killing someone in the eighth level of Energy Gathering was not difficult, killing someone at the ninth was an actual fight that could end in his death.

After waiting for around five minutes, the earth started vibrating. Gravis narrowed his eyes as he looked towards the direction of the Fire Guild. Thousands of people were charging towards him. Gravis took a deep breath. He knew that his challenge would be popular.

But not this popular!

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Chapter 142: Introduction

Gravis looked on as the army of fire disciples charged towards him, and he tried to think of a way to make it more orderly. How was he supposed to pick his enemies? They couldn't just all attack him at the same time, could they?

"Stop!" he shouted, and surprisingly, everyone stopped. About a hundred meters was between him and the fire disciples, and now, Gravis finally had time to analyze the strength of the arrivals. Surprisingly, most of them were at the seventh level of Energy Gathering. Only a very few of them were at the eighth level, and he could see no one at the ninth level. There were also some with an even weaker level, but that was probably just because they wanted to watch. 'Huh, I'm being underestimated. That's been a while.'

The last time when Gravis had been underestimated was when he newly arrived at the Middle-Continent. Those three disciples of the Lightning Guild had attacked him then. Ever since then, only enemies that could actually succeed in killing him had arrived. 'But that's also good,' Gravis thought with a small smirk.

Usually, he wouldn't care about such weak people. They would not come even close to tempering his will, but this time, it was different. Every one of them should have at least one pill to strengthen the body. In this case, he could get something out of the fights, even if those people were weak. On top of that, they were the ones searching for death. Though, he should warn them, just in case.

"Let me warn all of you," Gravis said as he made his neck crack to loosen up. "People at the ninth level of Magic Gathering have a real chance of killing me. Supreme geniuses at the eighth level have a small chance of winning," Gravis' expression changed to a disdainful smirk. "While people at the seventh level are committing suicide by coming here."

Of course, that riled the crowd up even more. 'What arrogance!' was what everyone was thinking right now. Someone at the seventh level had double the Energy of someone at the sixth level. Every single one of the people in the seventh level were already feeling bad for wanting to fight someone one realm below them. Yet, Gravis had said that they were suicidal? They had never seen such an arrogant person, even in their Fire Guild.

"I'll stuff your face, you arrogant prick!" shouted someone at the seventh level. The person quickly took out a bottle with a pill and threw it at Gravis. Gravis caught it, looked at it, and nodded. The other people spat to the floor in anger. That dick had managed to be the first, and now he would get the opportunity to shove Gravis' arrogant words back into his mouth.

Gravis didn't take out his weapon and just gestured with his fingers to come at him. The fury of the fire disciple exploded, and he took out his saber. Many of the fire disciples used sabers and halberds since those were the most violent weapons. Sabers were a more aggressive version of swords, and halberds were a more aggressive version of an axe.

The disciple charged at Gravis, enveloped his saber in fire, and used all his strength to slash at Gravis.

CLING!

Gravis caught the saber with two fingers. His body was already as powerful as the Energy of someone at the seventh level of Energy Gathering, so why would he care about such a weak slash? The attacker's element might be powerful, but when someone used their weapon in such a simple attack, they relied on their physical power for the speed. Using his element like this only increased the destructive power of the attack, not the speed.

Everyone's eyes flew open in shock. What were they seeing? Someone at the sixth level of Energy Gathering caught the full power attack of someone at the seventh level? How was that even possible? On top of that, his fingers didn't even seem to care about the fire.

When someone talked about the body's elemental resistance, they meant the body's resistance towards elemental attacks from a higher level than itself. Nearly no one trained their body, so when people fought in the Energy Gathering Realm, they never talked about the body's strength, but about its elemental resistance.

For example, Gravis' body had been slightly stronger than someone at the third level of Energy Gathering, when he had last fought the fire disciples on the tree. Every single disciple of the Fire Guild, at that time, had been at the fourth level of Energy Gathering, at least.

His body hadn't been able to withstand such fire attacks then. Yet, if someone at the third level of Energy Gathering had thrown a fireball at Gravis, he could have nearly ignored such an attack. It might've scorched his skin a little, but nothing serious would have happened.

Right now, Gravis' fingers felt a burning heat, but they didn't really get injured. His body was already at the seventh level of Energy Gathering, and such a small amount of fire was no issue for it. Gravis smirked at the attacker, who took a deep breath in shock. Gravis' other hand shot forward to the disciple's throat.

CRACK!

Gravis' hand grabbed the throat of the disciple and squeezed with all his strength. The head fell off, similar to how the top of a tomato would fall off if someone squeezed it hard. Gravis opened his hand again, and only a thin string of mush remained of his neck. His body was incredibly weak without the defense of his element.

The body fell to the side, and Gravis used the robes of the body to clean his bloody hand. Then, he looked through the body's valuables but only found a few Energy Stones. Gravis simply pocketed them. After that, he held up the body and threw it over the river.

SNAP!

Skye took off and swallowed the flying body like a dog would swallow a treat that had been thrown at it. Gravis turned around and looked at the faces of the disciples of the Fire Guild.

The disciples looked at him with incredible shock. That was a supremely powerful body! Gravis hadn't even used a real attack. He had just grabbed the poor guy. What a monster!

Gravis just smirked at them. "Anyone else at the seventh level interested?"

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Chapter 143: Genius at the Seventh Level

"I will," shouted one disciple at the seventh level of Energy Gathering. Gravis was quite surprised because he had been sure that, after his display, no one on that level would want to fight him. Wasn't it evident that he would just crush the people on that stage? Yet, when Gravis looked closer at the disciple, his eyes shined a little.

'He has a Will-Aura. That's probably a supreme genius of the Fire Guild,' he concluded. After all this training with his will, Gravis achieved some kind of feeling for the wills of others. Gravis expected that, at some point, everyone would be able to tell the strength of will of others just from a look. Gravis was probably just very early with that ability. 'But what could a Will-Aura even change?' he thought.

The disciple saw that no one else at the seventh level stepped forward and promptly threw a pill at Gravis. Gravis looked at it and nodded to the disciple. "Before we start, let me ask you something," Gravis said to the disciple.

The disciple nodded like it was no big deal.

"Why do you still want to temper your will even though you already have a Will-Aura?" Gravis asked, and the watching disciples took a deep breath in shock. How did Gravis know that he had a Will-Aura?

The disciple lifted his eyebrows in surprise, but they quickly furrowed again in concentration. "My will might be superior in my current cultivation Realm, but it won't stay like this forever," he explained. "I need to keep my advantage if I want to rise!"

Gravis could only sigh. So the reason why the disciple was tempering his will was the same as Gravis. This was actually the first person that Gravis had met, who was similarly superior in will to others but still wanted to temper themselves. Others were happy with their advantage and wouldn't care about the far future. Wasn't being at the Spirit Forming Realm already enough?

"Alright, let's go," said Gravis as he beckoned to the disciple. The disciple felt insulted. Gravis obviously knew that he already had a Will-Aura, so why was Gravis still not taking him seriously? Gravis didn't even take out his weapon.

This disciple had already seen how strong Gravis' body was and wouldn't run straight into his death. Instead, he made some fireballs in his hands and readied them. Gravis lifted an eyebrow. The disciple should know that fire would not do much against him. Why was he using just fire? The only way to get through his defense was with a combination of fire and physical attacks.

The disciple charged at Gravis while keeping both fireballs ready. When they were rather close, the disciple threw one fireball at Gravis, who quickly punched it with his fist. Usually, Gravis would just evade, but he wanted to see what the disciple was planning. The fireball exploded with a loud bang, but Gravis didn't get disoriented by that. Gravis also heard another small noise and smirked.

WHOOSH CLANK!

Gravis smirked as he caught the saber of this disciple too. The small noise he had heard was the second fireball. Why would the second fireball be quieter and further away than the first one? An average

cultivator at that level might not be able to guess the attacker's plan this quickly, but Gravis had a lot of battle experience.

Gravis had guessed that the disciple used the shockwave of the other fireball to increase his speed. Together with the literal smokescreen in Gravis' front, the disciple would break through the smokescreen with a faster speed than Gravis would have anticipated. 'Quite a smart way to fight,' Gravis praised.

The disciple grew shocked, but he had way more battle experience than the last one. Instead of waiting for his death, he quickly made the fire around his saber explode to get some space. Surprisingly, Gravis' hand got blasted away due to the impact. The explosion might not have injured his hand much, but the shockwave overpowered his physical strength. 'Interesting,' he thought.

WHOOSH!

Suddenly, an aura pressed down on Gravis. Gravis never fought against another person with a Will-Aura, and he felt surprised how heavy it felt. 'Is that how my enemies feel?' he thought to himself with interest. It felt like he was deep underwater and all surroundings pressed into him. The pressure didn't just come from the top. It felt more like it was everywhere and tried to press and get into his body.

WHOOSH CLANK!

The attacker tried to use the moment when he released his Will-Aura as a surprise to catch Gravis off-guard. Of course, Gravis wasn't encumbered even in the slightest. This was a newly created Will-Aura and wasn't even close to his own. Gravis' Will-Aura had already been as strong as the attacker's when he hadn't even arrived in this world yet. Gravis easily caught the saber again in his hands.

This time, the attacker wasn't as calm as before. He had used everything in that attack, including his Will-Aura. Anxiety appeared in his heart. He had to do something!

BOOM BANG!

His saber exploded again, but before he could retreat, a huge hole appeared in his torso, lightning still flickering around it. The disciple looked at his torso in shock. "Don't use the same trick twice," said Gravis as he walked through the smoke of the explosion, lightning still flickering on his right hand. "I said that everyone at the seventh level is only looking for death by fighting me."

The disciple looked at Gravis in horror as Gravis pointed at him. Two small bolts of lightning came out of his finger and shot through the disciple's eyes, killing him instantly. Just like that, a genius, who was bound to be a Spirit Forming expert, died.

Gravis absorbed the Energy and went through the valuables of the corpse. He was 40% on his way to the seventh level of Energy Gathering with the absorbed Energy from the two seventh level disciples he had killed.

Gravis found a sizable amount of Energy Stones and also took a closer look at the disciple's weapon. It was about as good as his current weapon, and he decided to keep it as a spare. Who knew? Maybe he would lose his weapon again. Then, he grabbed the corpse and threw it over the river without looking. Of course, Skye quickly ate it.

Gravis stood up again and cracked some of his joints. "Someone else at the seventh level wanna have a go?"

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Chapter 144: That's Not How It's Supposed to Go!

This time, no one else at the seventh level spoke up. Who was Gravis kidding? That guy with the Will-Aura was already one of the top people at the seventh level of Energy Gathering in the Fire Guild. That guy was already able to fight people at the eighth stage, yet Gravis just killed that guy with a single attack.

They all sighed. Gravis hadn't been kidding when he said that only supreme geniuses at the eighth level of Energy Gathering and people at the ninth could fight him. Someone at the eighth level of Energy Gathering would similarly get stomped into the ground if they didn't have a Will-Aura.

The disciples at the eighth stage also breathed heavily. None of them had a Will-Aura. Why would someone at the eighth stage with a Will-Aura fight someone at the sixth stage? Gravis sure wouldn't. It was only natural to think that there was nothing for them to gain in such a fight.

"Argh! I'll go!" shouted a disciple at the eighth level of Energy Gathering. "You cowards won't dare to fight someone at the sixth level? Why are you all even part of the Fire Guild!?" he shouted at the crowd.

The other disciples first wanted to stop him from going. This was suicide! Yet, when he called them cowards, their concern vanished and got replaced by disdain. Fighting a battle that one couldn't win is not bravery but stupidity. There, at least, had to be some chance of victory. That stupid idiot called them cowards? Fuck that guy!

Gravis was quite surprised that someone at the eighth level of Energy Gathering still wanted to fight him. 'Well, in over a thousand people, there has to be at least one idiot, I guess,' he thought. Everyone around the disciple knew that he couldn't win because they were actually somewhat rational people. 'Well, more Energy and money for me,' Gravis thought.

The disciple threw a pill over, and Gravis looked at it. This time, Gravis' eyes furrowed. "This is not one of the accepted pills," Gravis said as he threw it back. The others looked in shock at Gravis and the pill. Sure enough, it was not one of the pills on the banner.

"What? You won't accept this pill? Are you a coward?!" the disciple shouted, but the others didn't buy it. Their disdain increased even further. The guy wanted to act tough but never intended on actually fighting.

"Senior brother, please accept this humble gift from your junior," said one guy at the seventh level of Energy gathering to him. He quickly handed over a pill bottle with a body strengthening pill. The disciple wore an obvious, fake smile on his face.

Without thinking much, the disciple at the eighth level actually accepted the pill bottle, and his brain stopped working. He didn't see that one coming. He only accepted it by reflex!

"Yep, that's one of the acceptable pills," said Gravis from a distance and extended his open hand. "Come on, throw it over! We can fight then," he said.

The brain of the disciple completely stopped, and he started breathing heavily through his mouth in panic. This was not how all this was supposed to go!

KICK!

The guy got kicked to the front, towards Gravis. He hadn't seen the kick coming in his panic and could only look back at his disciple brothers and sisters in shock. He now stood in the front, away from all other disciples. "Come on, you can do it, senior brother!" shouted one disciple, and the others quickly followed.

Soon, over a hundred disciples were cheering him on. The disciple looked at his disciple brothers and sisters, but in his mind, they all looked like bloodthirsty beasts who just wanted to see him die. His panic and fear heightened, and cold sweat appeared all over his body. If he retreated now, he would lose all his status and honor. Everyone would look down on him. Yet, if he fought, he would most likely die.

He quickly looked from the crowd to Gravis and then at the crowd again. In his panicked mind, there was only one thing he could do.

WHOOSH PACK!

He threw the pill to Gravis, who caught it with a smirk. The disciples quietened down and looked at the guy with shock. He actually went through with it! With this, he had regained all his previous glory, and then some. In their eyes, he went from a hypocrite to a hero!

Instead, Gravis sneered at all of the disciples. 'The fact that he accepted the fight doesn't show the strength of his will, but its weakness. It is obvious that he will die, yet his will is so weak that he can't handle the pressure from his disciple brothers. If I were in his shoes, I would just flee. Who cares what others think about me?'

The breathing of the guy finally calmed down a bit. The decision had been made, and there was no turning back now! He closed his eyes and took a deep breath to ready himself for the most challenging fight he would ever have in his life. If he managed to get through this, he would manage to get through every other obstacle as well. This was a chance for him! He only had to win! Slowly, he opened his eyes again, furious battle-intent raging in his eyes.

BANG!

His head exploded as a lightning bolt hit it. Gravis sneered from the other side of the arena. 'Why do people close their eyes in front of an enemy? Are they stupid?' he thought in disdain.

The reason why people often closed their eyes before a fight was to get ready for the battle. Most battles they had fought previously were just spars. They sparred with their disciple brothers and sisters and in tournaments. In such spars, it was forbidden to attack the opponent when they were not ready yet. Even if that were allowed, why would they do that? The actual fight in a spar was more important than winning or losing. If the opponent hadn't readied themselves, they couldn't get everything out of the spar.

Gravis came from a different part of the world. Here, the disciples mostly sparred to get stronger. Real life and death battles mainly happened with beasts. Together with the karmic luck of humans, over 90% of all encounters with beasts were initiated by humans in an ambush. It was really rare for beasts to

ambush humans. So, even in an actual life and death battle, humans could still ready themselves because they initiated the fight.

What about Gravis? Many times, he would be the receiver of an ambush, and he never had any time to ready himself for a battle. The battles nearly always came out of nowhere. He also only fought for tempering, survival, and resources. There was no friendly sparring in his book. The only exceptions had been back in Body City.

Gravis leisurely walked over to the corpse and took the few Energy Stones and the other pill that Gravis didn't accept previously. The pill was actually for healing injuries. 'That might come in handy at some point,' Gravis thought. Of course, he didn't forget to absorb the Energy from the body. With this, he would only need 20% more to reach the seventh level.

Of course, Gravis didn't intend to break into the next level right now. He wanted genuine tempering, and only people at the ninth level of Energy Gathering could offer that to him. If he broke into the seventh level, nearly no one in the Energy Gathering Realm would be able to truly force him into a life and death battle. Probably only some supreme geniuses at the ninth level of Energy Gathering could have a chance of killing him.

Though, the problem with that was that supreme geniuses at the ninth level of Energy Gathering would just break into the Spirit Forming Realm. Such geniuses already had a Will-Aura, and nothing was stopping them from breaking into the next level. So, all in all, Gravis wanted to remain at the sixth level for a while longer.

Gravis threw the corpse to Skye, who promptly swallowed it. Skye was quite happy with the current situation. It was getting some delicious free food.

Gravis stood up and looked at the disciples. "If there is no one among you who is strong enough to fight me, then go get someone who is!"

The disciples gnashed their teeth in helplessness, and some of them ran back to the Fire Guild. Gravis watched at all this with a smirk and narrowed eyes.

'Now, it will get interesting!'

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Chapter 145: A Helping Hand

Gravis waited for the strong people to arrive. The number of people at the ninth level might be small, but there would probably be people at the eighth level with a Will-Aura. Those people knew how to fight since they went through plenty of life and death experiences to get their Will-Aura. Gravis' excitement grew as time passed.

"I would like to spar with you!" shouted a disciple at the eighth level of Energy Gathering. "I don't want a life and death battle."

The others looked at him and then thought that that was actually a really good idea. If they paid Gravis the pills, he would surely accept some spars. He didn't have anything to lose after all.

"I don't spar," said Gravis back without looking at the person. The other disciples were surprised by what Gravis had said. What did he mean with, he didn't spar? Why would someone not spar? Through sparring, they could find out their own weaknesses and rectify them. By rectifying their weaknesses, their strength would increase. Not sparring just sounded stupid in their mind.

"What do you mean with, 'I don't spar'?" another disciple shouted, echoing the other disciples' thoughts.

"You still haven't realized yet?" asked Gravis with furrowed brows at the disciples. Seeing that no disciple answered, Gravis just harrumphed. "Sparring might, theoretically, make you find out about your weaknesses, but it also creates new weaknesses."

The disciples also furrowed their brows. This was similar to what some of their seniors had told them, but when everyone saw their own weaknesses in a spar, they ignored their seniors. They all saw their improvements with their own eyes. If put to a choice, the disciples would rather believe their eyes than what other people said.

Gravis saw their unwilling eyes and sighed. 'I'm using the Fire Guild for tempering, so I might as well repay them somewhat,' he thought.

"Think back to the three fights previously," Gravis said. "Every single one of them knew that this fight would be a life and death battle. Yet, the first guy wanted to test me by using a half-assed attack. That might be possible to do in a spar, but in a genuine life and death battle, the opponent will make use of that weak attack to deal a fatal blow. The first person died because he was basically sparring with me while I tried to kill him."

Before the disciples could say anything, Gravis continued. "The second opponent fought properly and tried to kill me. Unfortunately, his realm was too weak. As you all have already noticed, my body is equal to the Magic of someone at the seventh level of Magic Gathering. So, without actually physically hitting me, he had no way to injure me. I guess that that guy probably had had a Will-Aura for a while and hadn't met many powerful enemies recently, which inflated his ego and made him overestimate his strength."

"The third guy closed his eyes in a fight. There is nothing more stupid than closing one's eyes in front of an enemy. If your enemy wanted to kill you, would they just wait for you to get ready? You might as well make some stretches in the fight if you believe that. The third guy was obviously used to sparring, where he could get away with doing something like that, and therefore wasn't able to adapt to a real fight. He died because he sparred too much."

Gravis was finished with his explanation, and many disciples fell into thought. Most of them would have probably acted similarly to the first and third guy. With Gravis' explanation, they knew that doing these things was stupid. Actually, they already knew that it was stupid even before Gravis told them, but would they have still done it?

Some of the disciples shivered. They had been used to sparring, which made them neglect the danger. They might recognize the danger with their mind, but their emotions were so used to fighting that they didn't react differently when a genuine life and death battle was about to commence. They would still stay calm, like in a spar, which made them neglect the danger.

Most of the disciples felt a feeling of fear now. They had seen how the others died, but in their mind, they had survived every fight they had ever fought. Their emotions still hadn't acted up even after they had seen three of their brothers die. Only now did they realize the actual danger present. Now, they looked at Gravis differently.

They didn't look at him with disdain or arrogance anymore. Their emotions finally realized that there was a very real chance of them dying here. Ironically enough, the place of logic and emotions had switched places. Before, their head told them that they could die while their emotions didn't care. Now, their emotions felt fear, while their head told them that Gravis wouldn't just attack them without reason.

Gravis saw how the disciples reacted and nodded. 'This should be enough payment for using the Fire Guild.' Gravis looked into the sky. He felt the Spirit of three people watching all this. The fighting area was just barely inside of the ten-kilometer range of newly ascended Spirit Forming experts. They had been watching since the very beginning, and Gravis conveyed his thoughts with his eyes.

Inside the central tower of the Fire Guild.

The Guild Master and the two Vice-Guild Masters sat close to each other on their respective thrones. Normally, they would playfully banter with each other, but this time, the mood was somber. They all looked at each other with narrowed eyes.

"He actually managed to feel our Spirits. That's unusual," said the first Vice-Guild Master while the other two nodded. "He has a body equal to the Magic of someone at the seventh level of Magic Gathering. He obviously has tremendous fighting experience. Judging by what I have seen, his lightning is also not ordinary, and lastly, he noticed our spirits." The first Vice-Guild Master took a breath. "His talent is absolutely terrifying, way more so than a normal Heavenborn."

"I wonder," said the Guild Master as he leaned back on his throne. "Is this what happens if a Heavenborn actually trains their will?" he asked himself and the others.

All their brows furrowed at the same time. The Guild Master had told them a lot about Heavenborn, and they knew that Heavenborn always had weak wills. "Actually," started the Guild Master again, "you have forgotten about two additional aspects. He's already this strong, yet he still intends to temper himself in genuine life and death fights. He also still wants to increase his physical power even further."

The Guild Master narrowed his eyes. "If he only wanted to temper his body, he would have acted weak to lure in more people at the seventh level of Magic Gathering. He could get a mountain of pills this way. Yet, he won the fights with as much intimidation as possible. He even helped our disciples realize the actual danger. It is apparent that he only wants to fight the powerful ones. His battle strength at the same level could already be considered peerless, yet that is not enough for him. What an endless hunger for power."

The Vice-Guild Masters also took a deep breath. In their mind, the thought appeared that they might actually be looking at the future High Priest of the Heaven Sect. What other reason would Heaven have to create such a powerful Heavenborn, if not for replacing the current High Priest?

"Don't offend him," said the Guild Master, and the other two nodded severely. They might be battle-hungry maniacs, but this was something beyond their ability. For once, they had to think about the survival of their whole guild, or maybe even whole sect. They remained silent for a full minute.

"Imagine if that boy weren't a Heavenborn," said the second Vice-Guild Master with a laugh to lighten the atmosphere.

The other two looked at him and then also laughed slightly.

"That would be even more terrifying!"

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Chapter 146: Defense Line

The time passed without much talking as Gravis, and the other disciples, waited for the stronger ones. It took a couple of minutes, but then new people started arriving. The first person that came was at the eighth level of Energy Gathering, and he immediately took out a bottle of pills, ready to throw them at Gravis.

PACK!

One of the disciples that had been here since the beginning grabbed the arm of the new arrival, stopping him from throwing the pills. "What?" said the new arrival but couldn't say anything further as another disciple kicked him in the stomach. He fell over, and the surrounding disciples started piling on him and kicking him while he lay on the ground.

"You idiot! Do you wish for death so much?" shouted one disciple, furiously kicking the downed one.

"I'm sure our brothers told you what happened to the previous ones! Stop seeking death, you fucking idiot!" said another one, increasing the power of his kicks. They were protecting the life of the new arrival from his own stupidity.

Meanwhile, another new arrival at the eighth level readied himself to throw his pill-bottle to Gravis.

RHOOM BANG BANG BANG!

Another hill of disciples piled onto him and, just like the previous one, started fervently kicking the downed disciple. "Fucking stop!" shouted the kicking disciples.

The downed disciples could only cry bitterly. 'That's what I want to say!' they thought as their brothers were beating them.

More disciples started arriving with their pills ready. They had heard what their brothers had told them, but who would believe such nonsense? Some guy at the sixth level of Magic Gathering was beating people two realms higher than him without breaking a sweat? Not even the geniuses of legends could do that!

Like this, nearly every new arrival got taken down to the ground as the number of beatings increased.

PAK PAK PAK PAK PAK!

Yet, the tide of stupidity was unstoppable as Gravis caught five bottles of pills simultaneously. Five disciples at the eighth realm managed to throw their pills at Gravis at the same time, and the kicking disciples finally stopped as they furiously grabbed their hair in frustration. 'You fucking idiots!' they all screamed in their minds.

The five disciples stood in the front, looking at their disciple brothers in disdain. "You cowards don't even dare to fight someone several levels below yours. You should feel ashamed of yourselves!" shouted one of them with thick disdain dripping from his voice.

A famous saying went through the watching disciples' minds as they heard the guy. 'The gates to heaven are open, but you choose to barge through the locked gates of hell!' It was already too late, and they couldn't stop them anymore. The best the disciples could do was keep future arrivals at bay until they saw what happened to those five.

Like this, a peculiar scene of hundreds of disciples blocking all paths to Gravis was created. The disciples readied their weapons for intimidation and acted like they were defending their home from invaders. Yet, the "home" they were protecting was Gravis, while the invaders were their fellow brothers and sisters. 'We must protect our brothers and sisters from their stupidity!' they thought, ignoring the fact that they had acted the same way just a couple of minutes ago.

Gravis found this scene to be quite entertaining, but he quickly focused on the five disciples standing at the front. "Alright, you can all come at me at the same time," he said nonchalantly.

The five disciples first were surprised, but then showed thick disdain towards Gravis. "Who do you think you are? Do you think you are Heaven's chosen... a God?" the disciple quickly corrected himself as he realized that Gravis, as a Heavenborn, was actually Heaven's chosen. "Move aside!" he shouted as he pushed the one beside him away.

BANG "AH-!"

His scream was cut off as a pillar of lightning appeared under him and scorched his whole body. The disciple had immediately died. Gravis didn't care if they accepted going at him at the same time. Gravis had moved his lightning across the floor until it was under the guy and then detonated it. As long as the guy didn't move, the lightning would hit. They had paid for their deaths, and death they shall receive.

The guy who had just been pushed looked to the one that pushed him, but his mind stopped as he only saw a black corpse falling down. "Wha-"

BANG!

That disciple was incinerated too, as Gravis used the same attack again. Like this, only three of the five people remained. Most of the disciples at the "defending position" didn't turn around since they were busy defending against an onslaught of stupidity.

An explosion of lightning sounded different from an explosion of fire. They had already guessed that those two explosions probably meant that two of their brothers had just died. This only strengthened their resolve to defend.

The remaining three disciples "fighting" against Gravis drew their weapons immediately, and their breathing quickened. Their emotions were going wild, and the long-forgotten feeling of death appeared

again. One of them saw lightning creeping towards him on the floor, and his whole body shivered. 'I can't die!'

He jumped to the side, evading the lightning, and looked back at the explosion that had just happened at his previous position. He watched the explosion in shock as he felt like he had just dodged death.

BANG!

The disciple got incinerated as Gravis shot a lightning bolt at him. The disciple had been fully focused on his near-death experience and hadn't watched Gravis. Gravis, of course, wouldn't miss such an opportunity. Like this, only two people remained.

The two people hyperventilated in panic, and their weapons shivered. Fear and absolute panic rampaged inside their minds. 'I'm going to die,' they thought, overwhelmed with fear. The sudden appearance of such an intense fear made them lose their rationality. They quickly turned around and fled.

BANG!

Another disciple exploded as Gravis threw a lightning bolt at the back of his head. That disciple had not watched Gravis while fleeing, which had been a bad decision. The other one still had enough rationality to keep an eye out for Gravis. Gravis released lightning around him as he bent his legs, ready to sprint forward.

BOOM!

The earth under Gravis exploded as he used his body's full power to accelerate, supported by his lightning movement. Regarding speed, the fire element could be considered okay. It was not fast, but it also wasn't slow, while lightning was considered as the second fastest element, just behind wind. Together with Gravis' powerful body, one could imagine his speed.

The last disciple wasn't even able to flee to the defending line of disciples before Gravis already appeared behind him. The shock of Gravis' speed made the disciple freeze, and Gravis used a lightning bolt to explode his head. Like this, all five disciples had been killed.

Gravis had stopped absorbing Energy when it had reached 99% of the amount necessary for him to break into the next level. Theoretically, Gravis could also remain at 100% of the requirement. He would just need to not condense his Energy to remain at the level.

He chose 99% instead of 100% because of the feeling of reliance. If he fought a strong enemy while having the possibility to make a breakthrough at any point, he wouldn't feel genuine danger. It would be similar to having a strong person behind him that could intervene if he died. This was not real life and death tempering.

Gravis used lightning movement to make all the corpses move to him. He quickly went through their remaining valuables and pocketed anything that he could need in the future. Then, he threw the thoroughly cooked corpses over the river, one by one.

Skye was super happy, right now. So much good food!

The fighting at the front had ended by now. The new arrivals saw what had happened to the earlier arrivals and their bodies shivered in fright. They quickly understood why their brothers were keeping them away. The new arrivals quickly joined the defense line. Who were they kidding? Killing one person at the eighth realm was one thing, but straight-up slaughtering five of them at the same time was something completely different.

Like this, Gravis impatiently waited with crossed arms for someone strong to arrive.

'How long is this going to take?'

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Chapter 147: First Proper Fight

A couple of seconds after Gravis had killed the last disciple, the defense line parted for a new disciple to step forward. This obviously showed that the disciples of the Fire Guild approved of this opponent. Gravis looked at the new arrival, and his eyes narrowed. 'Ninth level of Energy Gathering,' he concluded. 'Now, the real fight begins.'

The disciple stepped forward and looked at Gravis in rage. "Why did you kill the last two?" he asked with anger. "They have already lost all their will to fight and only wanted to flee."

Gravis' expression didn't change. "If I let them live just because they gave up, this wouldn't be genuine life and death tempering anymore," Gravis answered. "You can't just run from a fight and expect that your enemy doesn't attack anymore. At least, you have to survive until you are safe."

The new arrival narrowed his eyes too. "Your reasoning is sound, but that is only if you don't have any compassion for the lives of others. I couldn't do what you just did, because I am not an emotionless monster," he explained with disgust.

The statement didn't impact Gravis' will. Obviously, the new arrival hadn't gone through experiences where sparing an enemy's life came back to bite him in the ass, compared to Gravis. Gravis had spared his enemies' lives two times, and both times a stronger force returned to kill him. Gravis didn't like being this cruel, but it was a necessity for survival.

WHOOSH PACK!

Gravis caught a pill bottle and looked at it. His eyes shone when he saw the pill because it was one of the more expensive ones on the banner. Gravis looked up and nodded at the new arrival.

SHING!

For the first time today, Gravis took out his saber and readied it. His enemy was at the ninth level of Energy Gathering. His enemy had a genuine chance of killing Gravis if Gravis took him lightly. The breathing of the onlookers quickened, and their eyes narrowed. This would be the first real fight!

The disciple also took out his weapon, which was a humongous halberd. Gravis looked closer at the halberd, and his eyes narrowed even further. 'This halberd looks incredibly heavy. Either this guy uses a special fighting method that requires such a heavy halberd, or he also trains his body. Judging by the expensive pill he threw at me, it is probably the later.'

BOOM!

The earth under the disciple exploded as he shot forward with incredible speed. Gravis was already prepared for such speed. A strong body not only increased attack and defense but also speed. The disciple lifted his halberd and readied himself to strike.

BOOM!

The earth under Gravis also exploded as he shot forward. The eyes of the attacker slightly widened. He knew that Gravis had a powerful body, but he had expected Gravis to stay on his spot, like all the other times he had fought. Yet, the disciple didn't lose his focus, and he quickly slammed his weapon down.

BOOM!

Gravis blocked the slash, and the earth under him exploded into many pieces that shot into the distance. Gravis' arms trembled due to the powerful force of the attack. Usually, he wouldn't passively block like this, but he had to find out how powerful his opponent's body was.

'He uses a heavier weapon than me, and he also had the initiative in the attack. Judging by the power, his body should be at around the sixth level. My lightning won't be able to kill him directly without sufficient Energy. Quite impressive," Gravis thought.

Suddenly, the attacker smiled ferociously, and Gravis saw fire building up on the halberd. This was the same move that the guy with the Will-Aura had used previously. That guy had only been at the seventh level of Energy Gathering, while this one was at the ninth. The power of this explosion would be quadruple of the power of the earlier guy. Gravis had to do something, or he would get injured severely.

BZZ BOOM!

In a split-second decision, Gravis used his lightning to detonate the fire before it could reach its highest density, weakening the explosion. Gravis got thrown to the ground by the explosion, and the top of his head, as well as his back, received severe burns. Due to the explosion, Gravis got pushed into the ground until he lay face-down on the earth.

On the other hand, the disciple wasn't prepared for the early explosion and hadn't readied himself yet. Because of the shockwave of the explosion, he got thrown back for a couple of meters but remained uninjured. He quickly got his bearings back and looked at Gravis, who was lying on the ground right now and readied himself for another attack.

BANG!

The earth under the disciple exploded as a thick mass of lightning shot towards his right leg. The disciple screamed in pain and decided to jump back, instead of attacking. This attack had come out of nowhere, and he had not seen any lightning creeping across the floor. How did Gravis manage to bring his lightning over to him?

Gravis had, of course, used his Elemental Synchronicity to create a tunnel for his lightning. Like this, the enemy wouldn't see the lightning creeping towards him. Gravis knew that his enemy's body was powerful, so he had used a full 20% of his whole Energy reserves in this one attack. If he didn't commit fully to this attack, he wouldn't be able to leave a heavy injury on his opponent.

The disciple landed a couple more meters away and looked at his leg. The colors black and red dominated his leg, and the disciple felt that it was incredibly difficult for him to use his injured leg. His eyes narrowed, and his teeth clenched. This will be troublesome!

BOOM!

Gravis had noticed how the focus of his opponent had shifted to his leg and used this opportunity to stand up and shoot towards his opponent. The explosion came from Gravis, shooting himself forward with all his power. Gravis' back and head might be injured, but that didn't impact his fighting ability much. Those were only superficial injuries spread over a big surface.

The disciple quickly looked forward again and noticed that Gravis was only three meters in front of him, bursting with lightning. Gravis was readying himself for a mighty overhead strike. The disciple's eyes shrunk to pinpricks due to the shock, and he quickly tried to block the swing with his halberd.

Gravis smiled in disdain. 'Idiot,' he said in his mind. The saber came down at the halberd.

Clank.

Only a quiet clank rang out as the halberd threw the saber away into the distance. Yet, the disciple would have preferred a loud boom over this quiet clank. Something was not right! His eyes quickly went from the saber to Gravis, as he felt two warm hands touch his chest. The disciple's eyes widened in shock, panic, and fear as he looked into Gravis' smiling face, just 30 centimeters in front of his own. "Bye!" he heard Gravis say.

BOOM!

Gravis' two hands released over 40% of his Energy storage into the chest of the disciple, completely incinerating everything in front of them. Earlier, Gravis made the disciple fully focus on this saber, and then simply ducked under the raised halberd and arms.

Gravis had called the disciple an idiot because blocking was often the wrong decision. If the disciple had the guts to put his life on the line, he would have counterattacked with one of his own slashes. Like this, if Gravis went through with the attack, he would be killed, while the disciple, if he moved his head slightly, would at most lose an arm. In that situation, Gravis would have had no other choice but to abort his attack, giving the disciple the initiative.

The disciple fell over onto his back, and his eyes looked with shock into the sky. All the organs in his chest had been completely obliterated, and there was no way for him to survive. Slowly, his consciousness disappeared, never to reappear again.

The onlookers had watched the fight with shock. Someone at the sixth level of Energy Gathering had actually killed someone at the ninth. Not even the geniuses of legends had been able to do that! They could barely believe their eyes, as fear took hold of them. This was insane!

Gravis only had a single healing pill, which had been a spoil from one of the earlier disciples fighting him. Since the injury didn't impact his fighting strength, Gravis decided against using the pill. Instead, he kneeled down and looked through the belongings of his opponent. Gravis' eyes widened as he saw many more body tempering pills. This one guy had given him more pills than all his previous opponents combined.

Gravis smirked as he threw the body over to Skye. Then, he dusted his robe off and took back his weapon, which had been thrown far away by the disciple's block. Of course, Gravis also took the halberd with him, sticking it into the ground near his usual spot. Gravis walked back to his spot, turned around to look at the audience, and spoke.

"Next!"

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Chapter 148: Crimson

"Interesting," said an imposing voice as the disciples parted for someone new. All the disciples cupped their hands at the new arrival, calling him "elder". The new person was a middle-aged man with a wild red beard and long red hair. People in the Energy Gathering Realm could live for about 200 years, and someone who looked middle-aged, at that level, would probably be around 100 years old.

Gravis looked at the person with narrowed eyes, and his insides shivered. 'Supremely powerful,' he judged. He felt that the new arrival was very close to having a Will-Aura. The person probably only needed one more proper fight to condense his Will-Aura, yet that was not what made Gravis nervous.

This new arrival was also on the ninth level of Energy Gathering, but the feeling that he gave Gravis was like Heaven and Earth compared to the last opponent. Gravis was very good at judging the strength of his opponents, and this person felt close to sure-death to him. He guessed that if this elder and the last disciple fought, the last one wouldn't be able to hold out for long. 'He might actually be one of the most powerful people in existence in the Energy Gathering Realm.'

The elder slowly walked forward and looked deep into Gravis' eyes. "You can actually kill people three levels higher than you," he said in seriousness. "I am quite impressed. You might prove to be a slight challenge to me."

Gravis' eyes looked into the eyes of the elder. His instincts were screaming at him not to fight this person, but that couldn't stop him. Maybe, it was similar to the earlier person with the Will-Aura at the seventh level. That disciple had also fought Gravis with inferior strength. Gravis had called that disciple stupid, but he felt the same feeling as that disciple right now. Gravis wanted to fight that elder, even if it meant death.

'Just like the last guy, this one is at the ninth level of Energy Gathering, yet their pressure is on a completely different level, even though he doesn't have Will-Aura, yet,' Gravis thought. 'This probably means that this person has way more combat experience than the last one, and he probably also has a supremely powerful body. No Will-Aura, yet I still feel so much danger? His body is probably at the ninth level.'

Someone at the ninth level of Energy Gathering with an equally powerful body meant that the person could fight high-rank Energy Beasts solo. On paper, the elder was way above him in everything, except Will-Aura and fighting experience. Gravis felt like he was looking at a high-rank Energy Beast. 'Can I win with my current Realm?' Gravis asked himself.

"Master, I want to fight him first," said another new arrival. This one was a thin youngster with piercing eyes. The youngster stepped forward and pulled out an incredibly long sword. The sword was nearly two meters long, which surprised Gravis since that weapon looked incredibly unwieldy.

Yet, when Gravis looked into the eyes of the new arrival, he felt his strength. 'Eighth level of Energy Gathering and a Will-Aura,' he concluded. 'He might also be stronger than the last one.'

The elder looked at the young arrival. "Are you sure you can take him, Crimson?" the elder asked his disciple, Crimson, in seriousness.

Without looking at his master, the disciple took out his sword. "No," he commented coldly, but with thick battle-intent shining from his eyes.

Instead of growing apprehensive for his disciple, the elder only nodded. "Good! Only with an attitude like this can you reach the top!" he shouted proudly. The elder took some steps back to leave room for their fight. "I hope you survive!"

WHOOSH PACK!

The disciple threw over a pill bottle, and Gravis accepted it. After looking at the pill, Gravis' eyes widened. This pill was the most expensive body tempering pill, except for the Body Ascension Pill. Yet, instead of nodding, Gravis jumped to the side.

SHING!

A sword swung through Gravis' previous location, cleanly bisecting the earth. Just like Gravis, the disciple had taken advantage of his opponent's lack of focus. Of course, Gravis never relaxed in front of an enemy. He had always kept watch over his opponent from the corner of his eyes. Gravis' saber quickly appeared in his hand.

Crimson looked surprised that Gravis had dodged the attack, but his eyes only narrowed further. He knew that there was a significant chance of him dying in this fight. Without hesitation, Crimson shot towards Gravis again, fire shooting out of his whole back to increase his speed. He lifted his sword and slashed at Gravis horizontally.

'Judging by this speed, he should have a physical body about equal to my own. It seems like there are more people tempering their bodies than I had thought,' Gravis thought as he lifted his sword to block.

Gravis was actually mistaken about that part. A tempered body was only usual on people at the ninth level of Energy Gathering without a Will-Aura. Life and death tempering was hard to find, and those people still wanted to progress. The only thing they could do at that time was to temper their bodies. Only the supreme geniuses under the ninth level of Energy Gathering had the resources to temper their body. The whole Fire Guild had less than five of those.

CLANK!

Gravis made it appear like he wanted to block the attack, but he actually jumped a little. Due to that, he got pushed to the side and flew around Crimson. In one fluid motion, Crimson slammed the tip of his sword into the ground and lifted his hand for a diagonal block. His other hand left the handle of his sword and readied a fireball.

Originally, Gravis wanted to overwhelm his opponent with a barrage of attacks and force him into a passive state, but he decided against that. If Crimson had only blocked, it wouldn't be an issue, but he also readied an attack with his other hand. If Gravis attacked, that fireball would explode on his body.

Crimson was at the eighth level of Energy Gathering, which meant that his fire could damage Gravis. 'He's very experienced!'

Clank BOOM!

Gravis kicked the side of the sword from below, and it shot upwards. Because of that, the sword blocked the fireball and made it explode. The disciple hadn't expected that, and his body got thrown back. Gravis ignored the fire as he walked through the explosion, burning his whole body. 'Time to make a gamble!'

CLANK!

Gravis swung his saber to the left and, sure enough, hit something metallic. Due to the explosion and the resulting smokescreen, none of the combatants could see the other, and Gravis had thought what he would do if he were Crimson. Crimson had the advantage of a longer weapon, and he would probably try to hit Gravis inside the explosion with his ridiculously long sword.

Crimson didn't have the time to use an attack with both hands since the other one went out of control due to the shockwave, so he could only have used his right hand, which still held the sword. Therefore, the attack could only come from the left! Gravis used his full power in that swing while Crimson only used one hand, and the sword wildly flew away.

The Crimson's eyes widened in shock, and a slight amount of panic appeared in them. Yet, he had a Will-Aura, and his will would not be impacted by this! His other hand quickly formed another fireball, and he threw it in front of him.

BOOM!

Crimson couldn't see what his fireball hit, but the fact that it exploded meant that he had hit Gravis since his fireball would only explode if it hit something. With this explosion, Gravis would be pushed back. He readied his sword and slashed the smoke in front of him again with an overhead swing.

CLANK!

He hit something, but it was not at the spot he had expected. He felt the resistance and sound coming from very close to him and very close to the ground. He looked down and saw Gravis blocking with his saber on the ground, directly in front of him. The last remainder of the slash had hit him and stopped his slide forwards. Crimson's eyes widened in shock.

What had happened? After Gravis had blocked the side-swing inside the smokescreen, he had started sliding low to the ground. The thrown fireball went above him, and Gravis had used his lightning to detonate it. Like this, Crimson would think that Gravis was thrown back when in reality, he was very close to him. Of course, with Gravis' luck, the last part of his opponent's swing just so happened to be an overhead swing instead of a horizontal one. 'Tch, lucky bastard,' Gravis thought from the ground.

Gravis quickly stood up while sliding his saber along the sword. They were still inside the smokescreen, but they could see each other since they were so close. Crimson's eyes focused, and he pulled his sword back, readying it for another swing. At the same time, a mighty pressure appeared around Gravis.

"Goodbye," said Crimson, readying his sword for another slash. He had not used his Will-Aura all this time so that he could take Gravis by surprise. Gravis' saber was not ready for a block, and with his Will-Aura's sudden appearance, Gravis could not manage a block. The fight was over.

WHOOM!

Suddenly, a tremendous pressure pressed into Crimson, and his breathing stopped for a moment. His brain stopped working for a second, and that second spelled his doom.

SHING!

Gravis beheaded Crimson, who still held his sword above him. Gravis had used his Will-Aura for the first time today and, just like Crimson, used it to surprise and stun his opponent. If Crimson had been at the ninth level of Energy Gathering, their Will-Auras would have canceled each other out due to the Realm difference, but Crimson had only been at the eighth level. Like this, Gravis' condensed Will-Aura overpowered Crimson's.

Gravis took a deep breath. His whole upper body was injured, and he felt immense pain all over his body. Of course, that pain was nothing compared to the constant headache he had due to the Energy in his mind. Some of his organs were also damaged due to the multiple shockwaves of the explosions, and Gravis had to regenerate. He took out the healing pill and swallowed it. It would only take about three minutes to heal.

Like this, Gravis waited inside the smokescreen.

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Chapter 149: Red

The surroundings outside the smokescreen were loud with discussion. After the initial explosion, the onlookers had not seen anything of the fight anymore. They had only heard several clanks and explosions for a while, but after some seconds, everything had calmed down inside the smokescreen. Now, people were discussing who the winner was.

Most of the disciples guessed that Gravis had probably won, but they couldn't be sure. Crimson had been incredibly powerful, and he had been acknowledged as the strongest disciple under the elders. That said a lot about his power since someone could only be considered an elder after remaining at the peak of Energy Gathering for many years. Most of those elders had already fully tempered their bodies.

The only reason why they still remained in the Energy Gathering Realm was that they didn't have a Will-Aura. Yet, with age came complacency. Many of those elders started feeling complacent with their current status. Everyone inside the guild and in the Middle-Continent respected them and their strength. Why was there a need for more power?

Yet, there were still a small few elders that were ready to put their life on the line to step into the Spirit Forming Realm. The Fire Guild had a total of around 20 elders, and only around three of those were actually interested in more life and death tempering. Yet, how difficult was it to find tempering for someone that powerful in the Energy Gathering Realm?

They were too strong for middle-grade Energy Beasts, yet they didn't have the strength to kill a high-grade Energy Beast solo. Humans that were a danger to them would only be people in similar situations.

Due to that, there were also only a select few of those around. On top of that, one first needed enmity to fight with another human on that strength, under normal circumstances. For example, what would the Lightning Guild say if an elder from the Fire Guild killed one of their elder in a fight? The situation would be difficult.

What about going to the Core-Continent? Spirit Forming Realm experts ran rampant in the Core-Continent, and those elders would be helpless against those. The chance of death was even higher than fighting a high-grade Energy Beast solo. So, all in all, the only will tempering, that those elders could find, were hunts for high-grade Energy Beasts together with other people. Sadly, it was hard finding one of those.

The teacher of Crimson looked at the smokescreen, took a deep breath, and sighed. He had heard the last slash before everything went quiet. The elder had heard the sound of his disciple's weapon hundreds of times, so he could distinguish that the last slash was not from his disciple's weapon. Crimson was dead.

Yet, the elder continued to wait. Was he angry about his disciple's death? Of course, but his will was strong enough to suppress his anger. Gravis was surely injured, and killing him like this would not pose a challenge. He wanted his opponent to be in top form because, only then, would Gravis be strong enough to strengthen the elder's will.

Some time later, the smokescreen cleared, and the onlookers could finally see the battle scene. They saw Gravis standing in the middle, his weapon ready. Surprisingly, Gravis had also taken the weapon of Crimson and had slung it over his back. Why would Gravis carry such a long weapon on his back when it could impact his flexibility and mobility? The onlookers didn't know. The onlookers could only sigh as they saw the headless corpse beside Gravis.

Gravis only needed about two more minutes to fully heal, but he still looked at the elder with narrowed eyes. Gravis couldn't rule out the possibility that the elder would attack him furiously, as soon as he saw Gravis.

The elder also looked into Gravis' eyes. "How long?" he asked neutrally.

"Two minutes," Gravis answered.

The elder nodded. "I want you to be at your peak when we fight," he explained. "Your Magic reserves are low. Take this," he said as he threw a pill over, which Gravis quickly caught. Gravis looked at it and felt a lot of Energy inside of it. Without waiting, he ate it.

If the elder only wanted to kill Gravis, he wouldn't need something like poison. He would only need to attack Gravis while he was injured. Gravis could guess how badly that elder wanted to temper himself, judging by the fact that he was middle-aged and very close to condensing a Will-Aura. The elder wouldn't throw such a supreme tempering opportunity away for revenge.

"I go by the name of Red inside the Fire Guild," the elder commented and then pointed at his dead disciple. "His name was Crimson, and I found him when he was only a small, homeless boy in some village. I raised him as my son and as my disciple. I named him after a fiercer version of the color red, hoping he would become fiercer and stronger than me."

Gravis lifted one eyebrow. "Why are you telling me this?" he asked.

The elder closed his eyes and took a deep breath. "I want you to know whom you have killed and who will kill you," he explained with a calm voice.

Yet, inside he was anything but calm. His rage was furiously ravaging around his insides, trying to find a release. How could one remain calm in front of their child's murderer? It also didn't help that Heaven was trying its absolute best to increase those emotions of rage inside of him.

Heaven was always active behind the scene, even if it was not apparent. Most times, its plans wouldn't even happen because of some circumstances. It had tried to increase the emotions of the upper echelon of the Lightning Guild when Gravis went there. It had tried to move some high-grade Energy Beasts in the Wind Guild to attack him, and right now, it was trying to make Red attack Gravis.

Luckily, Red's will was already too strong to be influenced by his emotions, even if they were incredibly intense. This was just one of Heaven's attempts to kill Gravis that would never see the light of day.

After Red explained his reason for telling Gravis about his background, Gravis didn't say anything back. Words were meaningless in this situation. Either he died or Gravis died. Like this, some minutes passed until Gravis had fully recovered.

POCK!

Red took out a pill-bottle and threw it at Gravis. Gravis looked at it and saw that it was another costly pill. After he had inspected the pill, Gravis looked back to Red and nodded, taking out his saber. Red also took out his weapon, which was also a saber. Both of them readied themselves, and the onlookers felt like the fighting arena was about to explode. They jumped further back, for safety, and then watched without blinking.

Gravis' most challenging fight was about to start!

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Chapter 150: Fight Against Red

BOOM!

Red exploded forward with all his power, and his speed was unreal. Gravis looked at him without a change of expression and dodged.

Red missed the attack and felt a little surprised. He was sure that his speed was fast enough so that Gravis couldn't react to the telegraphing of his attacks. Red had only lifted his sword for an overhead slash shortly before he reached Gravis. Logically, Gravis shouldn't have been able to react to this attack so adequately.

How did Gravis manage to dodge? For the first time in a long while, Gravis had to use his pre-dodging again. The last time when he had needed to use this was when he had still fought demonic beasts. That was a full cultivation Realm ago! At that time, the demonic beasts had been too fast for him to react to their attacks, so he had to anticipate and guess their attacks preemptively. Yet, if even one guess were wrong, he would get severely injured, at least.

Gravis used the surprise of his opponent to his advantage and used a full 50% of his Energy to empower his attack. If he only used his physical power, Gravis would never be able to penetrate Red's defense.

CLANK!

Red stopped the slash with his free hand, using a fire explosion inside of his hand to weaken the attack. Normally, if he wanted to block such an attack, he would have needed to use about 20% of his Energy reserves. Blocking a physical attack empowered by an element with a hand took way more Energy than using such an attack. Yet, with this small explosion, he only used 5%. The saber slowed down a bit and hit his hand, yet due to the explosion, the attack only broke the skin.

'Terrifying!' Gravis judged. Red had managed to block his attack with way less Energy than normal due to the ingenious method of using an explosion in his hand. Like this, Gravis had used up 50% of his Energy while Red only used a little more than 5%. Gravis was wholly outclassed.

Red grabbed the saber with all his power and didn't let it go. Red smirked. Gravis had lost his weapon!

BZZT!

But who was Gravis? He quickly used his lightning to disturb the hand of Red, which made him able to pull his saber back. Lightning had the ability to slightly stun the opponent. Of course, if the opponent had a way stronger body, they wouldn't be majorly stunned. Yet, even with a strong body, a slight bit of the stun effect would remain.

Red's eyes widened as the saber left his hand without his control, and his eyes narrowed. Gravis' brain grew incredibly hot as he thought about many different circumstances at once. He had to grasp the whole battle situation in the blink of an eye to correctly dodge his opponent. Like this, Gravis ducked.

SWOOSH!

A saber barely missed the top of his head, cutting some hair. Gravis quickly used another 45% of his total Energy to attack Red's arm. The speed of Red's body was superior to Gravis' so, in comparison to Gravis, Red had the ability to react to Gravis' attacks. Like this, he grabbed the saber again, this time, using a smaller explosion.

SHING BOOM!

Gravis' saber went deep inside of Red's hand, and the lightning exploded, blasting the front half of his hand off. Red's eyes widened, and he quickly jumped back, keeping watch on Gravis. Why did the attack work this time when it didn't before? The reason was that Red actually had too much fighting experience instead of too little.

An inexperienced person would have used the same amount of Energy as before, but Red was sure that Gravis would not use the same amount of Energy again. Red knew a lot about Energy, and he guessed that earlier, Gravis had used a whole 50% of his Energy to injure him. If Gravis used the same amount again, he would be out of Energy. Yes, he might be able to sever the front of his hand, but that would make him helpless for the future fight. Gravis obviously wouldn't be that stupid.

Yet, Gravis had done just that. He had emptied a total of 95% of his reserves to sever the front half of Red's left hand. Red's eyes widened because this seemed incredibly stupid. He had seen how Gravis

fought, and he was sure that Gravis wouldn't do something this idiotic. Gravis would have no way to damage Red anymore, now.

Yet, without hesitation, Gravis ran forward and slashed again at Red. Red only smiled in disdain. Gravis was helpless now without any Energy. The fight was over. Red could also only see a tiny amount of lightning on the saber. This was Gravis' last remaining Energy, and even if he let the saber hit him, it would do nothing. Red just let Gravis slash his shoulder without a care.

Yet, as the saber closed in, Red suddenly felt an inexplicable, deep terror. For some reason, he grew incredibly afraid of that slash, and he quickly used his arm to push the saber away.

SHIING BOOM!

The saber went into Red's lower, left arm and suddenly exploded with lightning. The explosion was as intense as the previous two attacks, which shocked Red to the core. Where did that Energy come from? Weren't Gravis' Energy reserves empty? Like this, the front half of Red's left arm was also exploded off.

Gravis grimaced. 'I'm pretty sure that he didn't notice me refilling my Energy with an Energy dot from my mind. First, he looked like he wanted to do nothing, but suddenly his face changed, and he decided to block either way. This doesn't make sense. Did Heaven interfere?'

Yes, Heaven had created fear inside of Red's mind. It had done the same to Gravis when it killed that one bandit with the meteor. This was the best chance it had in getting rid of Gravis, and it wouldn't miss it!

Red quickly overcame his terror and slashed horizontally at Gravis. He didn't know why Gravis still had Energy, but that was not important right now. One of his arms was entirely useless now, and he couldn't allow himself to grow careless any further. Gravis quickly ducked under the attack again, and Red's eyes widened again. How had Gravis avoided the attack again? Slowly, Red began to see a pattern, and his eyes sparkled.

Gravis slashed at Red's torso from below Red's attack, but Red would no longer allow any errors.

BOOM!

Red used the stump of his left arm to place a big explosion in front of his torso. Like this, both combatants shot back due to the shockwave. In this short amount of time, Red had not been able to make the explosion strong enough to injure Gravis, but he had managed to gain some space. Without waiting, he immediately shot forward again, readying a fireball on what remained of his left arm.

Gravis also immediately ran at him and then ducked to the left of Red. Judging by the readied explosion on his severed arm, he would attack diagonally to force Gravis to the side of the explosion.

Yet, a horizontal slash came instead.